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# THE MIND OF A POET

*Volume Two*

*THE PRELUDE, A COMMENTARY*

BY

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## TABLE OF SIGLA, ABBREVIATIONS, ETC.

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All references which do not include a title are to the 1850 text of  
*The Prelude*

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A B C D E J J J M U V W X Y Z and The Alfoxden Notebook = the various MSS of *The Prelude*, or parts of *The Prelude*, as described on pp. xvi-xxv and [608 A-E] of De Selincourt's edition of *The Prelude*

A<sup>2</sup> or B<sup>2</sup> = a first correction of A or B (and so with other letters)

A<sup>3</sup> etc. = a second correction of A etc.

de S. = *The Prelude*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, 1 vol., Oxford, 1926

Oxf. W. = *The Poetical Works of W. W.*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, 1 vol., Oxford, 1914

Knight = *The Poetical Works of W. W.*, ed. William Knight, 8 vols., 1896

Nowell Smith = *The Poems of W. W.*, ed. Nowell Charles Smith, 3 vols., 1908

P. W., Youth = *The Poetical Works of W. W.: Poems written in Youth, Poems referring to the period of Childhood*, ed. E. de Selincourt, 1 vol., Oxford, 1940

Grosart = *The Prose Works of W. W.*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart, 3 vols., 1876

*Memoirs* = *Memoirs of W. W.*, by Christopher Wordsworth, 2 vols., 1851

Legouis trs. = *The Early Life of W. W.*, by Émile Legouis, translated by J. W. Matthews, 2 ed., 1921

Harper = *W. W., his Life, Works and Influence*, by George McLean Harper, New York, 2 vols., 1916

Garrod = *Wordsworth: Lectures and Essays*, by H. W. Garrod, Oxford, 1923

N E D = *A New English Dictionary*, ed. James A. H. Murray and others, 10 vols., Oxford, 1884-1928



## PREFACE

THIS second volume of *The Mind of a Poet*, which consists of a detailed examination of *The Prelude*, may seem to have no essential connection with volume one; yet it furnishes the basis upon which the first is built. For a sound understanding of Wordsworth's thought can be arrived at only through a careful examination of all the texts of all the passages in which that thought is expressed or implied, or in which incidents to which he attached importance are narrated. Unfortunately these passages are commonly elusive and difficult, often very difficult, and can be correctly interpreted only when studied in their contexts and when compared with the poet's other utterances on the subject, whether in prose or verse. Most of these passages are to be found in Professor de Selincourt's edition of *The Prelude* and are therefore discussed in this second volume; the remainder — such as those in *The Excursion* and in the Prospectus to *The Recluse* — have had to be considered in volume one, in connection with the subjects to which they relate. But to have stopped in the midst of a discussion of the mystic experience or of animism to convince a skeptical reader of the meaning of every difficult line quoted from *The Prelude* or the significance of every perplexing incident in it that is referred to here would have led to hopeless confusion. One topic, the Ministry of Wonder, which by its nature belongs in the first part, is put at the end of the notes to VIII because it depends perforce largely upon two hundred and forty lines which originally formed part of that book.

I have also considered in Part II various matters relating to Wordsworth's life and personality — his affair with Annette, his debt to Godwin, the change in his feelings towards the French, his wilfulness, indifference to history, love of wandering, sensitivity to sound, and the like — and have brought together the many scattered utterances which reveal his attitude towards formal education and books, his preoccupation with mystery and with the enduring, his antipathy to analysis, and his other leading ideas such as the unity of all and the active or creative

power of the mind. In view of the prime importance of *The Prelude* for understanding the mind and development of at least one great poet, I have tried to explain the meaning of every obscure line of that work, to consider every important variant reading of the manuscripts, to discuss the different senses in which the terms "nature" and "reason" are used, to call attention to the extent and excellence of the imagery, to the monosyllabic lines, the alliteration, and similar stylistic or prosodic matters which throw light on the general subject. I fear that I have often labored the obvious yet I hope that scholars will be patient with explanations of passages which for them need no comment but which present difficulties to less advanced students. It is likely that some of the more elusive problems and implications have escaped my notice but I have not avoided any that I have seen. Where I am mistaken I hope at least to call forth from others the true explanation.

The 1850 text of *The Prelude* is taken as the norm. When the 1804-5 text is referred to, A is inserted between the number of the book and of the lines but A never carries past a comma or a semicolon. The letters of Wordsworth and his sister are quoted from Professor de Selincourt's edition (6 volumes, Oxford 1935-9) unless they are addressed to H. C. Robinson, in which case they are taken from *The Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson with the Wordsworth Circle*, edited by Edith J. Morley (2 volumes, Oxford, 1927), or to Henry Reed, in which case they are taken from *Wordsworth & Reed, the Poet's Correspondence with his American Editor*, edited by Leslie N. Broughton (Ithaca, New York, 1933). Crabb Robinson's Diary is cited from *Henry Crabb Robinson on Books and their Writers*, edited by Edith J. Morley (3 volumes, London, 1938).

# *THE PRELUDE*

## A COMMENTARY

It is impossible for an expositor not to write too little for some, and too much for others. He can only judge what is necessary by his own experience; and how long soever he may deliberate, will at last explain many lines which the learned will think impossible to be mistaken, and omit many for which the ignorant will want his help. These are censures merely relative, and must be quietly endured. I have endeavoured to be neither superfluously copious, nor scrupulously reserved.

Johnson, Preface to Shakespeare





## INTRODUCTION:

### THE PLAN, THEME, AND BIOGRAPHICAL TRUTH OF *THE PRELUDE*

What a gain it would be, if we could forego some of the heavy tomes, the fruit of an age of toil and scientific study, for the simple easy, truthful narrative of the existence and experience of a man of genius,—how his mind unfolded in his earliest years—the impressions things made upon him—how and where and when the religious sentiment dawned in him—what he thought of God before he was inoculated with books' ideas—the development of his soul—when he first loved—the way circumstance imbued his nature, and did him good, or worked him ill—with all the long train of occurrences, adventures, mental processes, exercises within, and trials without, which go to make up the man—for *character* is the man, after all. Such a work, fully and faithfully performed, would be a rare treasure!

Walt Whitman, Review of Parke Godwin's  
translation of Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit*

"But did you really," he asked, incredulous, "think all those things you describe in your book just as you were flying around the Pagoda?" . . . No, I couldn't say I had. Certainly not those precise words, sometimes not even the thoughts were formed. . . . I had at least a sensation. I had an emotion; and I gathered that seed. I plucked off the hour hastily, in passing, without cracking it open. I took it home with me, not knowing when that pod would deliver its secret to me, but hoping that some day it would, if only I were patient. . . . Sometimes one waits years for these strange inner harvests, these "emotions recollected in tranquillity."

Anne Morrow Lindbergh in  
*The Saturday Review of Literature*, October 14, 1939

If I remember such and such rather than something else, it must be because I'm a different person from what I would have been if I had remembered other things.

Eric Gill, *Autobiography*, chapter 1

*THE PRELUDE* is an autobiography, of a kind; yet it is by no means a narrative of the first twenty-seven years of its author's life. It is not chronologically arranged, it omits much, covers some periods twice, and dwells at length on occasions when nothing happened. For example, Wordsworth mentions his parents and his brothers but once and incidentally<sup>1</sup> and tells practically nothing of his first nine years; yet he describes in detail his chance encounter with a solitary soldier and his waiting for the horses which were to take him home for the holidays. He has much to say about education and children's stories but almost nothing concerning study or adult reading. The one college subject on which he dilates, mathematics, is the one he neglected most; concerning Italian, in which he was interested and proficient, he is silent. To his first year at Cambridge he devoted an entire book but to the remaining three only a few lines, most of which are concerned with a single tree. His first and last college vacations he describes at length; but of his earliest visit to Wales, which continued three or four months, he makes no mention.<sup>2</sup> Even the account of his last vacation, in the Alps, deals with only five incidents in the first half of the trip and is silent about the rest.

Moreover, *The Prelude* exhibits a simplification of facts such as biographers are supposed not to practice. The picture of the first year at Cambridge probably includes aspects and developments that came in the two and a half years which followed, just as the 917 lines in Books VII and VIII which are supposed to be devoted to the three and a half months of his earliest residence in London really cover impressions received on later and more extended visits. When he went to France Wordsworth stayed at Orleans, at Blois, then again at Orleans; yet *The Prelude* speaks only of a single town or city on the Loire. As Annette enters the story here, some have seen in this simplification of the facts a deliberate attempt at concealment, although no sinister motive has been suggested for the fusing, in the picture of the boy of Winander, of the poet himself and a lad who died in childhood. Furthermore, the growth of the conviction that his field was to be "the actual world of our familiar days" is pictured as more steady and unwavering

than it really was.<sup>3</sup> Such simplifications were presumably made in order that the essential truth might be presented clearly. The complete story of almost any man's development is far more complicated than he or any one else knows or, if he knew, could relate briefly.

Then too, Wordsworth was an artist, far more of an artist than is commonly realized. "He was a severe critic on himself, and would not leave a line or an expression with which he was dissatisfied until he had brought it to what he liked. He thought this due to the gift of poetry and the character of the poet. Carelessness in the finish of composition he seemed to look on almost as an offence."<sup>4</sup> He remarked to his nephew: "I have bestowed great pains on my *style*, full as much as any of my contemporaries have done on theirs. I yield to none in *love for my art*."<sup>5</sup> To the astronomer W. R. Hamilton, who attempted versifying, he wrote: "The logical faculty has infinitely more to do with poetry than the young and the inexperienced, whether writer or critic, ever dreams of," and "The composition of verse is infinitely more of an art than men are prepared to believe; and absolute success in it depends upon innumerable minutiae."<sup>6</sup> *The Prelude* was conceived as a significant piece of art, as "a Work that shall endure,"<sup>7</sup> a kind of philosophic epic, and he had strong convictions as to the dignity of such a work, as to how it should be constructed, and as to what it should and should not include. It should not, for example, be partisan, go to extremes, or be as frank and passionate as private conversation. Thus in speaking of the time, after he turned from the Revolution, when he was lost in analysis and doubt, he expressed a wish to deal with the subject in

some dramatic tale, endued with shapes  
Livelier, and flinging out less guarded words  
Than suit the work we fashion.<sup>8</sup>

The work he was fashioning was to be of such breadth and general significance as to exclude the merely personal:

whatever else there be  
Of power or pleasure, sown or fostered thus,  
Peculiar to myself, let that remain  
Where it lies hidden.

(v. A 194-7)

But this is passion over-near ourselves,  
 Reality too close and too intense,  
 And intermixed with something, in my mind,  
 Of scorn and condemnation personal,  
 That would profane the sanctity of verse. (xi. 57-61)

As Aubrey de Vere remarked: "There was in his being a region of tumult as well as a higher region of calm, though it was almost wholly in the latter that his poetry lived. It turned aside from mere *personal* excitements."<sup>9</sup> And when a friend expressed the wish that he print his poems in the order of their composition he manifested a "feeling akin to indignation. . . . He said that such proceeding would indicate on the part of a poet an amount of egotism, placing interest in himself above interest in the subjects treated by him, which could not belong to a true poet caring for the elements of poetry in their right proportion."<sup>10</sup> "At the head of the first class [of poets]," he remarked, "I would place Homer and Shakspeare, . . . [who do not bring] their own individuality before the reader. . . . you never find *themselves*. At the head of the second class, those whom you can trace individually in all they write, I would place Spenser and Milton."<sup>11</sup>

Clearly it is difficult to write an autobiography which does not bring one's own individuality before the reader; yet for a work of its kind *The Prelude* is singularly impersonal. This will be more obvious if it is compared with Rousseau's *Confessions* or with the poet's own Autobiographical Memoranda, which is devoted almost exclusively to facts not mentioned in *The Prelude*.<sup>12</sup> The most English of poets, Wordsworth has the English reserve; Byron boasts of swimming the Hellespont but Wordsworth, although he has an admirable description of skating, gives no hint of his life-long delight in this sport. Nor does he reveal, as many autobiographers have done, whether he is fond of children, or clothes, or dogs, or fruit, or wine, or reading in bed, or a hundred other things. Few persons or places are named and few dates given. Jones, his companion on the Swiss trip and the ascent of Snowdon, is referred to as "a youthful friend"; Cockermouth, Hawkshead, Penrith, Patterdale, Cartmel, and other places very dear to him are not mentioned in the final text, although some of them were named in

earlier versions—he showed a marked tendency to eliminate the personal in revision. Neither the village nor the school of Hawkshead, which furnish the background for a third of the poem, are described, and nothing is said of Anne Tyson's cottage although the ash that stood near it received five lines.

These three motives,—the avoidance of the merely personal, the sense of form and artistic effectiveness, and simplification in the interest of clarity,—were jointly responsible for one aspect of Wordsworth's plan which is commonly overlooked. For *The Prelude* is not so much an account of its author's development as of the development of certain traits in him and the influence of certain forces on him. Thus I and II deal with the growth of his love of Nature; III and parts of IV and VI treat mainly of Cambridge and its influence; V, of books and early education; VII, of London and the effect of city life; VIII, of the growth of a lofty conception of man; IX, X, XI, and part of VI, of the French Revolution and its results; XII, XIII, and XIV, of the imagination. Within each subject the method is usually chronological but there is no attempt to make clear where the individual, William Wordsworth, in his totality, stood at any one time. What he was as a schoolboy, for example, is revealed chiefly in the first two books; but there are further hints in IV, and we must turn to V for his early reading and education, to VII for his boyish feeling about London, to VIII for the growth in childhood of his lofty conception of man and of his fancy, to IX for the democracy learned at Hawkshead, to XII for his attitude towards nature while there and for his watching for the horses which were to take him home for the holidays, to XIV for the independence and endurance learned at school and for his early pre-occupation with "that beauty, which . . . Hath terror in it." This is not all, even on this one period, but it is enough to show, not that Wordsworth arranged his material badly—quite the contrary,—but that he presented it according to subjects and did not attempt to give in one place his complete development at a certain period. A simpler illustration may be found in IX-XI, which deal exclusively with the Revolution and (except in the story of Vaudracour and Julia) give no hint of the attention devoted at this time to love and to poetry.<sup>18</sup> Similarly in the description of the

time when he "felt the sentiment of Being spread O'er all,"<sup>14</sup> there is no hint of the resulting aggrandizement of man which, as we learn from a later account dealing with the growth of the love for man,<sup>15</sup> was a marked feature of this period.

Furthermore, so far as *The Prelude* itself makes clear, the ascent of Snowdon might have taken place during the poet's school days instead of after his leaving the university; the growth of "wilful Fancy" described in viii. 365-475 may have come before or after nature was sought for her own sake; the love for man may have been slightly or considerably developed when the discharged soldier was encountered; and there may or may not have been much connection between the early versifying, the books read, and the increased love of nature. So, too, scholars have been unable to agree as to when Wordsworth lost faith in the French Revolution and when his "complete subservience to Godwin" began and ended. His recovery from the despair which terminated this period is recounted in the first part of XIII, where it is followed by a description of his wanderings on Salisbury Plain. The latter incident is told as if it were the culmination of the development already narrated, when in reality it occurred four years earlier, while his faith in the Revolution was still strong. Obviously, the general public, for whom the poem was composed, does not receive, and was not expected to receive, any clear notion of Wordsworth's biography or of the connection in time between the various aspects of his development.

In many respects, to be sure, *The Prelude* represents not what Wordsworth would but what he could do. He was dissatisfied—"it seemed to have a dead weight about it, the reality so far short of the expectation . . . the sense which I had of this poem being so far below what I seemed capable of executing, depressed me much." It "might certainly have been done in narrower compass by a man of more address, but I have done my best." If there were "redundancies" he feared they were "incurable."<sup>16</sup> As Dorothy wrote later concerning his failure to go on with *The Recluse*: "but the will never governs *his* labours."<sup>17</sup> If once he took hold of a subject he found it hard to let go, even though he was disappointed with the results. In consequence, London receives a disproportionate amount of

space, and one would say the same of the French Revolution if the subject were not of unusual importance apart from Wordsworth and if the three books which deal with it were not unusually interesting. The discussion of the education of children is too long, and some parts of III which treat of adult education and of life at Cambridge might well have made way for descriptions of the visits to Wales or of the rest of the Swiss tour. To be sure, these matters and others like them may have been omitted for the best of reasons, that they contributed little to the poet's development;<sup>18</sup> but one cannot help wondering if Wordsworth did not bring the account of his Alpine tour to a close because he thought it was already long enough, and if he would not have included his visits to Wales if he could have described them briefly and could have seen how to fit them into his scheme. One also wonders whether some episodes were not passed over because, while they stirred his imagination when they occurred, they failed to do so when he came to write.

A more baffling problem is offered by "Nutting," which was composed in Germany along with a number of the best episodes in the early books and which, according to the Fenwick note, was "intended as part of a poem on my own life, but struck out as not being wanted there." Why it was not wanted is a mystery, since it is greater poetry and is more directly connected with the imagination and with the growth of the poet's mind than hundreds of passages that were retained. Since it is not found in any of the early manuscripts of *The Prelude* there is a bare possibility that it was misplaced and, for a time, overlooked. But if so, why was it not worked into *The Prelude* on revision? This question raises another, larger one: why were no incidents, except the visit to the Chartreuse,<sup>19</sup> added on any of the numerous revisions of the poem? It is almost incredible that Wordsworth told every significant happening in his early life, that in the thirty-three years during which he worked over the poem he never thought of an aspect of his youth or an event in it that might well have been included. What seems more likely is that after 1805 he came, at least so far as *The Prelude* was concerned, to distrust his creative powers. Artists often have this feeling and wisely refuse to



touch a work which they see to be faulty. Wordsworth was quite willing to revise the phraseology of the poem but not to make any structural change.<sup>20</sup>

As to the part the warmer emotions, friendship as well as love, play in adolescence and in early manhood there are only a few hints,<sup>21</sup> but this is what the reticence of the period and of the author's temperament would lead us to expect. Possibly such emotions did not minister to the growth of his imagination, but they feed the imagination of most men and the poem is thinner and narrower by their exclusion. One other omission, which would seem to be of some importance, we know of from the lines in which he says that Burns

showed my youth  
How Verse may build a princely throne  
On humble truth. ("At the Grave of Burns," 34-6)

Now *The Prelude* describes at length how its author came to make verse "deal boldly with substantial things" but it does not mention Burns. Did Wordsworth forget or did he decide that the story was already longer and more complicated than it should be and this was one of the things that must be passed over?

For in concluding the poem he confessed, "Much hath been omitted, as need was," and referred specifically to books, fancy, nature, and human nature.<sup>22</sup> In the case of books we are perhaps able to see what happened—how, in v, he wandered from books in general to humble works which delight cottagers and children, thence to the freedom children should have in selecting their reading, then to the general subject of freedom in education with the boy of Winander presumably as an illustration, then back to the *Arabian Nights*, a defense of romances, and a description of his early enthusiasm for poetry. Clearly v, although entitled "Books," is in great part devoted to other subjects; and further reading reveals many comments on books which are not in v.<sup>23</sup> A more unfortunate result is that Wordsworth never comes to grips with this important theme. On the other hand, as a discussion of the education of children v is inadequate since it has nothing about the development of the emotions, the religious instincts, and the imagination; these

and other important aspects of the subject are treated in earlier and later books.<sup>24</sup> Equally desultory is VIII, "Retrospect," with its picture of the Helvellyn Fair, of Gehol's matchless gardens, of the idyllic life of shepherds in old time, and the story of Michael and the lost sheep. Then, too, in the books devoted to Cambridge, London, and the French Revolution, Wordsworth tends to describe places, conditions, and movements rather than to show how he was influenced by them. In treating London he so far forgets his purpose as to write,

More lofty themes,  
Such as at least do wear a prouder face,  
Solicit our regard; but when I think  
Of these, I feel the imaginative power  
Languish within me. (vii. 465-9)

What he should have said is that he was not writing a description of London but an account of the development of his imagination, and as the more lofty themes failed to touch his imagination they had no place in his work.

Inspiration is seldom systematic or orderly and Wordsworth's certainly was not; when he tried to harness Pegasus he produced *The Excursion* and *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*. On the other hand, he took fire at a number of incidents apparently of little importance in his development or otherwise and incorporated them in his poem: card-playing at Hawkshead, drinking in the college room Milton had occupied, hearing of the death of Robespierre, and wondering at the schoolmate who had visited London,—not to mention Anne Tyson in her Sunday best, and the dog that guarded his walks when he composed verse. No one wishes these passages removed, but in view of them, of the extended treatment of matters that contributed little to making the poet, and of the omission of incidents that did have influence, one cannot say that *The Prelude* is concerned exclusively with the growth of a poet's mind.

Indeed this could hardly be expected in view of the way it was composed. For apparently many of the best parts were first written as separate pieces, and the plan of combining them into a single poem may not have been decided on until nearly a year after they were composed. It was at least four years later

still before the idea was conceived of discussing the imagination in the work. That is, although Wordsworth explicitly refers to the imagination as "our theme" and as "the moving soul Of our long labour,"<sup>25</sup> yet he wrote an important part of the work before he decided to discuss the imagination in it, and apparently he removed nothing because it did not bear upon this topic.

There seems to be further evidence of diversity of purpose in the attention given throughout the poem, but particularly in Books I, II, IV, VI, to external nature. Book II begins with the definite assertion, "Thus far . . . have we . . . retrace[d] . . . Those [ways] chiefly that first led me to the love Of rivers, woods, and fields," and implies that the same course is to be continued through II. Later we are told that "this verse is dedicate to Nature's self," that the "object" or "point" of the poem is to trace "the growth of mental powers And love of nature's works," that

Hitherto

In progress through this Verse, my mind hath looked  
Upon the speaking face of earth and heaven  
As her prime teacher.

Wordsworth may have been aware of this seeming discrepancy but, convinced that the imagination was developed and sustained chiefly through intercourse with external nature, he may have believed that he was here merely dealing with a subdivision of his main topic—the chief means to the great end.<sup>26</sup> It is noteworthy that in reprinting the skating passage (i. 401-63) in *The Friend* and among his Poems he gave it the title, "Influence of Natural Objects in Calling Forth and Strengthening the Imagination in Boyhood and Early Youth," and that after describing the first manifestations of the imagination in the child he added:

From early days,  
Beginning not long after [infancy] . . .  
I have endeavoured to display the means  
Whereby this infant sensibility,  
Great birthright of our being, was in me  
Augmented and sustained. (ii. 265-72)

At any rate he came to feel as he went on with *The Prelude* that its real center, its unifying principle, was to be found in the imagination. What was notable about I and II was the illustration afforded of the power of the imagination to transform simple incidents; and the same thing was true of the most memorable passages throughout the poem. Furthermore, II included a psychological account of the first workings of the imagination in the child at the breast (this is found in the very early MS V); III and IV showed that in the main "imagination slept" <sup>27</sup> in Cambridge and during the first long vacation; V dealt with the support that childhood's powerful throne,<sup>28</sup> the imagination, received from the boy's reading; VI made clear in the passage on crossing the Alps that Wordsworth regarded his mystic experiences as closely connected with the imagination; VIII, that a lofty conception of man is produced by the imagination working in connection with nature; and XII, XIII, and XIV treated directly of the imagination, its nature, and how it is impaired and restored. The French Revolution, to which IX, X, and XI are devoted, greatly stimulated Wordsworth and probably assisted his imagination, but he does not affirm this; he connects the two only by showing that the Revolution led to rationalism and rationalism to the impairing of the imagination. As he seems never to have realized that it was his reaction from the effects of the Revolution that made him a great poet, he probably felt that in IX, X, and XI, as in parts of other books, he had disregarded his main theme in order to trace his development along other lines and to follow in detail his personal connection with the greatest event of his time.

The slight attention given to study and serious reading, which seems at first a strange oversight, wears a different aspect if considered in relation to the main theme. Wordsworth would hardly have addressed to Coleridge, the most learned of poets, a work belittling purposeful intellectual activity. He knew that a poet must have a well-stored and a well-trained mind, but he must likewise have good health and good spirits, he must labor incessantly to improve his style, his language, and his versification. Of all these things *The Prelude* says nothing; it is concerned with the imagination. And Wordsworth apparently felt that schools and learning contributed rela-

tively little to the development of this faculty, if they did not at times actually hinder its growth. He dealt with books and education only as they affected the imagination of the child; but he recognized that he should have told what Homer, Shakespeare, Milton, and even "wren-like warblings" did for the imagination of the adult.

Some readers will protest that Wordsworth could never have remembered, in the detail with which he describes them, incidents that happened many years earlier. Yet it should not be forgotten that he does not profess to remember every incident of his boyhood, that he describes only those scenes and happenings to which strong feelings were attached and which thus "remained in their substantial lineaments Depicted on the brain."<sup>29</sup> For such, he possessed a remarkable memory. But even if in the act of composition the creative powers of the poet unconsciously came to the aid of his memory, it does not matter. If the general outline and colors of the painting are true we need not quibble over each brush stroke.

But, it will be asked, *are* the general outline and the colors true? What assurance have we that they are not rather the product of later meditation and philosophizing, elaborate structures raised on meager early foundations? To this the only answer is that Wordsworth was a thoroughly honest man, one who faced reality, and, far from being a self-deceived dreamer, had a strong matter-of-fact side to his nature as well as a keen insight into human psychology. And in concluding his work he affirmed:

the discipline  
And consummation of a Poet's mind,  
In everything that stood most prominent,  
Have faithfully been pictured. (xiv. 303-6)

Furthermore, *The Prelude* reads like an honest work. Wordsworth confesses that he deals with "days Disowned by memory,"<sup>30</sup> that he cannot always say

what portion is in truth  
The naked recollection of that time,  
And what may rather have been called to life  
By after-meditation, (iii. 613-16)

that, like "one who hangs down-bending from the side Of a slow-moving boat," he

often is perplexed and cannot part  
The shadow from the substance, rocks and sky,  
Mountains and clouds, reflected in the depth  
Of the clear flood, from things which there abide  
In their true dwelling. (iv. 256-67)

As early as 1798-9 he found difficulty in making the distinction, for in describing one of his boyhood experiences he remarked, "unless I now Confound my present being with the past, Even then . . . I felt a sense of pain."<sup>81</sup>

So, in describing the time when he "felt the sentiment of Being spread O'er all," he is careful to explain that this may be because he "transferred" "to unorganic natures" his "own enjoyments,"<sup>82</sup> and he concludes his remarks about shepherds with the comment:

Of this I little saw, cared less for it,  
But something must have felt. (viii. 292-3)

Of the mother of the child who attracted him at a London theatre he says, "Scarcely . . . Do I remember her"; and later he confesses:

the hiding-places of my power  
Seem open; I approach, and then they close;  
I see by glimpses now; when age comes on,  
May scarcely see at all.<sup>83</sup>

*The Prelude* gives the impression of a writer who is doing his best, often imperfectly, with difficulty and uncertainty, to make clear just what happened and what his feelings were.

This is not to say that Wordsworth does not find in some of his experiences meanings of which he was unconscious at the time they occurred. He refers to "accidents"

that impressed my mind  
With images to which in following years  
Far other feelings were attached,

and, after asserting the influence of nature upon him while he was in London, adds, "This had I cause to feel tho' then I took

No note thereof." <sup>34</sup> Doubtless he dwells upon incidents which, when they happened, did not seem noteworthy; but this does not prove that the later judgment is not the true one. Wordsworth was not writing an autobiography, he was not describing his boyhood, and if *The Prelude* presents episodes as they contributed to the development of his imagination rather than as they appeared to his youth he is only carrying out his purpose. But we must not be too certain as to how they appeared to his youth, for in many respects he was a most unusual boy, sensitive, mystic, passionate, and deeply moved by things which other boys do not even see.

In one respect *The Prelude* is biased, for, as its author asserts, it is "in the end All gratulant." <sup>35</sup> Thus he passes rapidly over the despair into which rationalism and the outcome of the Revolution had brought him, in order to dwell upon his recovery; and thus, after picturing his idleness at Cambridge and the inadequacy of the education there, he adds: "But peace to vain regrets! We see but darkly . . . for myself I grieve not." <sup>36</sup> Later he comforts himself with the reflection:

Yet who can tell—  
Who knows what thus may have been gained, both then  
And at a later season, or preserved. (vi. 35-7)

In part this was spontaneous—the expression of a pleasant fatalism common to optimistic natures—in part it was deliberate, a philosophy of life more resolutely held as youthful exuberance waned. Coleridge had encouraged such optimistic teaching, urging his friend to "write a poem . . . addressed to those, who, in consequence of the complete failure of the French Revolution, have thrown up all hopes of the amelioration of mankind, and are sinking into an almost epicurean selfishness." <sup>37</sup> Later Coleridge asserted that the purpose of *The Prelude* was

. . . to infer and reveal the proof of, and necessity for, the whole state of man and society being subject to, and illustrative of, a redemptive process in operation, showing how this idea reconciled all the anomalies, and promised future glory and restoration. Something of this sort was, I think, agreed on.<sup>38</sup>

This attitude may be due to what Coleridge says was the plan of *The Prelude*—suggested in part by himself—"that Wordsworth should assume the station of a man in mental repose, one whose principles were made up, and so prepared to deliver upon authority a system of philosophy."<sup>39</sup> For a work of art this is a sound plan but it means ignoring certain facts of the poet's development.

Thus the poem has an ethical as well as an esthetic and a biographical purpose, and the first of these, by distorting slightly the development pictured, interferes to some extent with the other two. Closely allied to this purpose of showing that all is best was Wordsworth's tendency to find in his career, up to his departure for Cambridge and after his yielding up moral questions in despair, a steady growth along various lines ending in final arrival at the goal with all doubts laid, all problems settled, and no losses by the way. He may have felt that this was a necessary simplification and that for artistic reasons the poem—which takes him only to the threshold of his great creative period—should not end on a note of uncertainty but should suggest a completed development. Yet an important factor was the desire to persuade himself that the doubts and gloom which hung over him when he was concluding the poem were not serious. In reality there was frequent ebb and flow in his progress and he learned much and settled many problems in the years that lay ahead.

Herbert Read says, somewhat along this line, that in *The Prelude*

. . . the poet is conceived, not merely as William Wordsworth, but as an ideal character progressing towards a state of blessedness. . . . It is not Wordsworth's sincerity that is in question; a great poem like the *Prelude* could never have been written without the deepest sense of sincerity. But sincerity is not truth; it is only conviction—a state of belief directed towards some arbitrary end.

Its greatness does not consist in its biographical veracity. It is not a true poem in that sense. Rather it is a deliberate mask. It is an idealisation of the poet's life, not the reality.

The very process of poetry involves the idealization, or more exactly the universalization, of individual experience. . . . The personal has become the universal, and once in that freer space, it is almost im-



possible to find the way back again to the limitations of person, place and time.<sup>40</sup>

So too, W. H. Hudson feels "strongly in reading other men's recollections of their early years"

that unconscious artistry will steal or sneak in to erase unseemly lines and blots, to retouch, and colour, and shade and falsify the picture. The poor, miserable autobiographer naturally desires to make his personality as interesting to the reader as it appears to himself.<sup>41</sup>

Despite Mr. Read, the fault to which Hudson calls attention is not, I think, to be found in *The Prelude*. "Biographical veracity" it does not have if by that is meant giving a photographic picture of Wordsworth's youth or telling what a resident at Hawkshead might have noted. It does not record that the future poet tore his coat or lost his knife or won a prize or sprained his ankle, important as such things would have seemed to him at the time. Of the cruelty, jealousy, selfishness, and obscenity of childhood and country life it says almost nothing; of the disappointments, irritations, and sorrows on which autobiographies often dwell it gives only a hint, although as a homeless orphan with unsympathetic relatives Wordsworth had his share of these.<sup>42</sup> But they were like summer clouds, which pass away and are forgotten; they had little effect on his development and they did not prevent his youth from being unusually happy. Nor is the picture idealized. Wordsworth does not give the impression that he was better than his playmates, or abler, or more skilful. He robbed other boys' traps, stole boat rides, assisted in deceiving the inn-keeper when renting horses, and wasted his time at Cambridge. The things that happen to him might have fallen to the lot of any boy, and he does not act particularly well on any occasion. It is strange, if he wished to impress us, that he does not imply that he was courageous, does not mention his skill in skating, that he makes himself out a worse student than he was, calls attention to his "presumption" in dealing with nature, to the slowness with which he became aware of her shyer beauties, to his affecting more emotion than he felt at the ruins of the Bastille, to his thinking Le Brun's sentimental Magdelene the most rewarding sight in the Paris of 1791, to his lack of interest in the emanci-

pation of negroes, and to his stubborn wrong-headedness in refusing to face the outcome of the French Revolution. Surely there is no attempt here "to erase unseemly lines and blots," and as for the desire to make his personality interesting, little is said about his personality; it is the incidents and the development of the imagination and the love of nature that are stressed.

With Annette, the case may be different; for it is quite possible that he may have extricated himself from a very embarrassing situation by ignoring a significant element in his development. Yet it must be remembered that she was not his first love and may not have been his most ardent, that he tried to suggest the affair by inserting into *The Prelude* the Vaudracour and Julia story, that his failure here shows how difficult it would have been for him to handle such a situation with the brevity and deft ease it required, and that he may have come to believe (or have persuaded himself) that this passion had contributed little to the growth of his imagination and so had no place in *The Prelude*. This last idea gains weight when one recalls that tumult did not seem to Wordsworth a source of imaginative power:

The wind, the tempest roaring high,  
The tumult of a tropic sky,  
Might well be dangerous food. ("Ruth," 121-3)

Storms in nature or in the soul and such social and political upheavals as the French Revolution are not included in his account of the growth of the imagination.<sup>42a</sup> A love affair like his with Annette might strongly influence the verse of many poets; but this does not prove that it did so with Wordsworth, whose work was rarely inspired by a purely personal emotion. The deaths of his brother and his children, for example, moved him profoundly but not poetically. And with all of us brief experiences, however intense and absorbing, if they are but slightly connected with later life often have little permanent effect. It may be objected that many episodes are introduced which must have had far less influence than the meeting with Annette, many topics far less important than love; but this is to overlook Wordsworth's inability or disinclination to deal

with a subject briefly. If life in Cambridge and in London were to be included each must have at least a book. In this way scrappiness was to be avoided.

By "idealization" Mr. Read may mean that Wordsworth casts over his boyhood days a glamour, a dignity, and a poetic beauty that suggest anything but the rough-and-tumble life at the Hawkshead school. But Wordsworth describes the sports of his youth at length without softening them; and the life was "rich in beauty, beauty that was felt"<sup>43</sup> by the boy who stole out before sunrise to walk round the lake, who was deeply moved by the music of a flute coming across the water, by the song of a solitary wren, and by the silence that followed his own "mimic hootings," who drank in "a pure Organic pleasure from the silver wreaths Of curling mist," and whose eye, moving over the sea in the moonlight, gathered

Through every hair-breadth in that field of light  
New pleasure like a bee among the flowers. (i. 559-80)

If we are not to accept Wordsworth's repeated assertions of his youthful sensitiveness to the beauty about him what in *The Prelude* are we to believe? Undoubtedly the greatness of the poetry in which these early days are described gives them a dignity, even grandeur, which they rarely took on, but here again biography had to give way to more important matters. The style is none too elevated for the theme—how Nature framed "a being destined for no common tasks," the growth of

A youthful Druid taught in shady groves  
Primaeval mysteries, a bard elect  
To celebrate in sympathetic verse  
Magnanimous exploits.<sup>44</sup>

It seems likely, therefore, that *The Prelude* is as unprejudiced an account of his development as Wordsworth was able to give, and more honest as well as much more vivid than most men could compose. This is not to deny that, like all human productions, it is colored by its author's interests, desires, beliefs, prejudices, and sufferings; that it presents his youth in part as he wished to see it, and passes lightly over some things on which he disliked to dwell; that it simplifies his history and,

ignoring losses, pictures his later development as a steady progress. It is not to overlook the fact that, as a great work of art, *The Prelude* is a selection, intensification, and so a misrepresentation of everyday reality. And, finally, it is not to forget that, as W. H. Hudson writes:

It is difficult, impossible I am told, for any one to recall his boyhood exactly as it was. It could not have been what it seems to the adult mind, since we cannot escape from what we are, however great our detachment may be; and in going back we must take our present selves with us.<sup>45</sup>

But most criticism of the truth of the poem has been based on a misconception of its purpose, on the assumption that it was intended to be an autobiography. I have tried in this chapter to show that *The Prelude*, although by no means a miracle of architectonics, since it does not follow any one purpose throughout, since it omits things that seem important and narrates in detail incidents that appear irrelevant, is, however, more closely integrated than is generally believed, inasmuch as it usually passes over merely personal matters as well as purely intellectual or technical developments and in the main keeps to its theme, the growth of the poet's imagination. It seems likely that this unity of purpose is not, except in the last three books, the result of deliberate planning. Wordsworth wrote about what moved him most, incidents and scenes to which he "oft repaired, and thence would drink, As at a fountain." Not until later did he reflect that in these passages of life

We have had deepest feeling that the mind  
Is lord and master, and that outward sense  
Is but the obedient servant of her will. (xii. A 270-3)

The poem is the more convincing because of this spontaneity, because the episodes are usually not fitted into the argument, because it reveals that a great creative artist in surveying his past without any thesis to prove finds that what is significant in it has been made so by the transforming power of the imagination.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> His mother in v. 256-93; his father and brothers in xii. 305-9.

<sup>2</sup> To be sure, the ascent of Snowdon narrated in xiv 1-62 pretty certainly took place during these months but it is introduced solely as an illustration of the working of the imagination.

<sup>3</sup> See xiii 369 n

<sup>4</sup> Reminiscences by Mr. Justice Coleridge, in *Memoirs*, II, 302 (Grosart, III, 424).

<sup>5</sup> *Memoirs*, II, 474 (Grosart, III, 462). He thought Byron's style very slovenly but declared Shelley to be "one of the best *artists* of us all: I mean in workmanship of style" (*ibid.*, 463). See also Aubrey de Vere's Recollections, in Grosart, III, 494. He said of "Yarrow Revisited," "There is too much pressure of fact for these verses to harmonise, as much as I could wish, with the two preceding [Yarrow] poems" (Fenwick note). He omitted the admirable opening stanza of "Dion," as he explained in a note, "on account of its detaining the reader too long from the subject, and as rather precluding, than preparing for, the due effect" of what follows; and, despite the pleas of his friends, never restored it. In the Fenwick note to "Who rashly strove" he explained that in a number of instances he had written two poems on a subject because "the thoughts and images suggested in course of composition have been such as I found interfered with the unity indispensable to every work of art, however humble in character." According to Hazlitt his remarks on Poussin revealed keen appreciation of the *art* of the landscape painter ("Mr. Wordsworth," *Spirit of the Age, Works*, ed. Waller and Glover, IV, 277).

<sup>6</sup> Letters to W. R. Hamilton of September 24, 1827, and November 22, 1831.

<sup>7</sup> xiv 311; cf. i. A 158 (i. 147); xiii 309-12.

<sup>8</sup> xi. 283-5. "Flinging . . . fashion" is not in A, E has "more passionate words"

<sup>9</sup> "Recollections of Wordsworth" (Grosart, III, 489).

<sup>10</sup> "Reminiscences of Wordsworth" by R. P. Graves (*ibid.*, 474). See also "Personal Talk"

<sup>11</sup> "Reminiscences of Wordsworth" by Lady Richardson (*ibid.*, 435-6).

<sup>12</sup> Printed in *Memoirs*, I, 7-17 (Grosart, III, 219-24).

<sup>13</sup> *Descriptive Sketches* was composed on the banks of the Loire; it and *An Evening Walk* were presumably revised and certainly published shortly after his return to England. As they were his first volumes, they must have meant much to him.

<sup>14</sup> ii. 386-418.

<sup>15</sup> viii. 476-94.

<sup>16</sup> Letters to Sir George Beaumont of June 3 and May 1, 1805; cf. xiv. 312-29.

<sup>17</sup> Dorothy's letter to Mrs. Clarkson of March 27, 1821.

<sup>18</sup> Such I assume to have been the case with the omissions, which were probably deliberate, mentioned on pp. 272-3 above. The occasions in his boyhood when he "had to push against something that resisted, to be sure that there was anything outside of" himself (Knight, VIII, 202) were presumably passed over because he failed to realize their significance (see pp. 167-70 above).

<sup>19</sup> vi. 420-88.

<sup>30</sup> He added the lines to Burke (vii. 512-43) and the "Dear native Regions" passage (viii. 451-75), summarized the Vaudracour and Julia story (ix. 553-85 in place of ix. A 554-933), and omitted the tale of Michael and the lost sheep (viii. A 221-310). These last two were obviously out of place. Apparently he made no serious effort to incorporate into his poem the valuable discussions of the ministry of wonder and of the imagination (de S, 553-9, 600-5), which exist in a single manuscript.

<sup>31</sup> See ii. 276-81 n., 334 n., iv. 316-19 n.; vii. A 71 n.; xii. 261-9. For Annette see pp. 508-15 below.

<sup>32</sup> xiv. 312-29. Cf. ii. 1-2.

<sup>33</sup> See iii. A 524-30 n.

<sup>34</sup> Emulation in ii. 65-71 and iii. 500-5, democracy in ix. 215-32, independence and the acceptance of what is not understood in ii. 71-2 and xiv. 329-47.

<sup>35</sup> xiv. A 185, A 171-2. The final text (xiv. 206, 193-4) is the same except for the substitution of "feeding source" in place of "moving soul."

<sup>36</sup> v. 230, MS V variant of v. A 450-72, v. 11-14. See also i. 544-7 and ii. 421-51. It is at first disturbing to read near the end of the poem (xiv. 312-15) that one of its chief omissions has been external nature, with which Wordsworth has dealt directly to a far greater extent than imagination. But the lines that follow make clear that it is nature in relation to fancy (which is closely connected with the imagination), that he has in mind. And it must not be forgotten that indirectly most of the poem is concerned with the imagination. The incident of the boy of Winander, for example, illustrates "one of the earliest processes of Nature in the development of this faculty" (see p. 221 above).

<sup>37</sup> iii. 260.

<sup>38</sup> v. 507-9.

<sup>39</sup> i. 600-1.

<sup>40</sup> i. 614-15. Cf. vii. A 147-8.

<sup>41</sup> "Nutting," 48-52, as sent to Coleridge in Dorothy's letter to Coleridge of December, 1798, or January, 1799. The text Wordsworth published has "feelings" for "being" and omits "Even then."

<sup>42</sup> ii. 386-409; so iii. 128-9.

<sup>43</sup> vii. A 391-4; xii. A 336-9. The final texts are slightly less explicit.

<sup>44</sup> V variant of v. A 472, X variant of vii. A 734. These passages do not occur in any of the later texts but the similar i. 592-6 is in the earliest and latest manuscripts.

<sup>45</sup> xiv. 386-7. See xiv. 293-6 n.

<sup>46</sup> iii. 482, 493-4. Cf. i. 344-50.

<sup>47</sup> Letter of the summer of 1799, quoted from *Memoirs*, I, 159.

<sup>48</sup> Coleridge, *Table Talk*, July 21, 1832.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Herbert Read, *Wordsworth*, New York, 1931, pp. 50, 13-14, 49.

<sup>51</sup> *Far Away and Long Ago*, chapter xvii.

<sup>52</sup> See i. 345-7; v. 412-19, 515-22; xii. 305-16; xiv. 329-41.

<sup>53</sup> See pp. 114, 124-5 above. *The Prelude* deals with the Revolution but, as is pointed out on p. 285 above, does not connect it with the development of Wordsworth's imagination.

<sup>54</sup> viii. 163.

<sup>55</sup> Lines added in D to i. A 354-62; A variant of iii. A 82-93.

<sup>56</sup> *Far Away and Long Ago*, chapter xvii.

## BOOK I

“**W**ORDSWORTH'S greatest poem is, by far, the first book of *The Prelude*.”<sup>1</sup> This praise does not, however, apply to the first third of the book (1-269), which is too personal to have much appeal for the general reader and which does not compare favorably with the beginnings of other great poems. The casual unpretentiousness and freshness of the first nine lines are unusual in the opening of a long philosophical or epic work. Lines 269 to the end contain, in Garrod's words, “effects of poetry hardly surpassed in our literature” (p. 31).

This book describes a few days of Wordsworth's life in September, 1795, says something of the ensuing months and of the summer of 1799; then, after a paragraph on his childhood, narrates episodes of his school days at Hawkshead, which lasted from May, 1779, to October, 1787 (aet. 9-17½).

Lines corresponding to A 1-54 were improvised in September, 1795; most of 269-612 and 631-5 was written in Goslar, mid-September, 1798, to the end of February, 1799; 46-269 in the autumn or early winter of 1799 before MS V, which does not contain them, was copied. The contents of lines 612-30 make clear that they were written after 269-612 but, as they are not in JJ, they were presumably not composed in Goslar, and, as they are in V, they probably do not date from the same time as 46-269 or 636-46, which are not in V. It is likely that they were written about the same time as ii. 451-71 (also in V),—that is, as Professor de Selincourt conjectures (p. xxxiv), shortly after mid-November, 1799; <sup>1a</sup> 636-46, as they are not in V, are probably later. The list of MSS should be supplemented from de S., [608 A].

1-45. In an “Additional Note,” pp. [608 G, H], Professor de Selincourt points out that this “whole passage cannot . . . have been actually written in 1795 in the form in which it appears in the A text” since A 20 and A 43-8 are found in JJ—de S., [608 E]—(which was written in Germany during the winter of 1798-9) in a different form and sequence. A strong

case has been made against Professor Garrod's dating of the Preamble by Mr. D. H. Bishop,<sup>2</sup> who reminds us that the plans for living at Racedown, which (he says) were completed before Wordsworth left London, are inconsistent with "the complete freedom of choice described in the opening lines"; that Wordsworth's reference to "a known Vale" (i. 72) does not fit Racedown which was unknown and not situated in a vale; that there is no evidence of a journey to Racedown in the autumn to 1795 taken on impulse "with the chance equipment of that hour"; that the opening lines of vii refer not to the beginning of the poem but to "a well remembered occasion deeply seated in his [Wordsworth's] affections"; that, at the time when he had reached "the soul's last and lowest ebb" (xi. 307) and had turned for distraction to satire and mathematics, he would hardly have "poured out" the "glad preamble" (vii. 2-4) or have been engaged in planning a long work on an heroic theme, and certainly could not have enjoyed "from morn To night, unbroken cheerfulness serene" (i. 112-13).

Mr. Bishop's own solution of these difficulties—that the Preamble refers to 1799, to an unrecorded visit to London, and to a journey of inspection made to Grasmere—seems to me impossible.<sup>3</sup> I think we must assume that while in London Wordsworth made arrangements to settle in the west with Dorothy and young Montagu, that he went to Bristol to look about, that Penney's offer of Racedown was considered but not definitely accepted, that one afternoon when Wordsworth left Bristol merely because of the beauty of the day the *wanderlust* led him to seek out Racedown in a vale he knew of.

One of the differences that is likely to distinguish the earlier version from the later may be seen in these opening paragraphs in which, although often better in detail, the final text lacks something of the spontaneity of the original lines. The difference is easily seen in 43 and 44, where the Miltonic device of placing a noun between two dependent adjectives "patient thought Abstruse" and "punctual service high" hardly suggests an extempore effusion. Furthermore, 31-2 are a poor exchange for A 33-40. The second paragraph, 31-45, is made seven lines shorter by the substitution of 31-2 for A 33-40, 35-6 for A 43-5, 39-40 for A 47-9, 42-5 for A 51-4.



3. Cf. xii. 93-104 n.

12. *clear*: In A, "sweet"; cf. 72 with A 82, 128 with A 138, and see de S., xlvii and n.

20. One of the many instances of the omission from the final versions of repetitions which occur in the earlier. Cf. 35, 139, 158, 314.

24-7. These hopes, like those mentioned in 41-5, 58, and 119-23, were soon dimmed. Although the worst was passed, Wordsworth's "cure . . . cannot be said to have been completed till the summer of 1797" (de S., 586), that is, two years later.

A 29-32, variant in A<sup>2</sup>. See Chapter v.

A 44-8, variant in A. *agitates*. See vii. 44-8 n.

49. Substituted for A 58, which was presumably not true of the whole passage.

50-5. As was his custom (see iv. 118-30 and de S. n., xiii. 133-6), Wordsworth composed 1-45 aloud.

52-4. Wordsworth's priestly conception of his office appears in the variants of iii. A 82-93, in xiii. 251-3, xiv. 139-41, and in *Recluse*, i. i. 700 ("I, divinely taught"). In *The Excursion*, iv. 43-4, the Wanderer, who in many respects is an idealized self-portrait, exclaims: "Me didst thou constitute a priest of thine, In such a temple [the mountains] as we now behold.")

73-8. Most of this is not in A and most of A 79-81, A 84-5 are not in the final text. Lines 75-6 suggests that he had not yet seen the cottage, Racedown, and that "known" (72) therefore means "known of."

81-95. Considerably changed from A 88-103.

✓ A 90. *balanced me*: Preserved my mental balance. Cf. Fenwick note to Immortality Ode, "I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality."

82-5. Wordsworth's sensitiveness to sound comes out in i. 269-78, 337-8, 430-44, 535-43; ii. 118-28, 161-74, 302-10; iv. 182-6; v. 374-84; vi. 221-3; viii. 636-8; x. 96-101; xii. 320-1; xiv. 56-62; de S., 562; *Evening Walk* (1793), 3-6, 25, 90, 96, 116-24, 144-50, 301-28; *Descriptive Sketches* (1793), 201-4, 223-42, 430-41, 504-9; *Excursion*, ii. 696-712; iv. 402-12; ix. 66-80; "Yes, it was the mountain Echo"; "On the Power of

Sound"; "At Dover"; "Roslin Chapel," 1-6. "Three years she grew," 26-30 is significant, especially

And beauty born of murmuring sound  
Shall pass into her face.

Walter Pater calls attention to these lines and to ii. 302-22 when he says of Wordsworth:

Clear and delicate at once, as he is in the outlining of visible imagery, he is more clear and delicate still, and finely scrupulous, in the noting of sounds; so that he conceives of noble sound as even moulding the human countenance to nobler types, and as something actually "profaned" by colour, by visible form, or image. (*Appreciations*)

M. Legouis writes:

A thousand subtle suggestions of natural sounds amply prove the pitch of acuteness to which this sense was developed in him, but its development was in no wise artistic . . . In Wordsworth it [the ear for music] was entirely wanting, and he was long unable to distinguish one air from another. But his ear for poetic rhythm, even, was not trained to a high degree of perfection . . . and the beauty of the most beautiful lines of his maturity is not strictly due to their melody. . . . Even in nature the sounds preferred by Wordsworth were preferred, not on account of their sweetness or their melody, but because of their meaning, their striking peculiarity, the emblem he discerned in them, or the spiritual state which they occasioned. (trs., pp. 460-1)

See also Chapter IV above and W. A. Heard, "Wordsworth's Treatment of Sound" in *Wordsworthiana*, ed. W. Knight, 1889, pp. 219-39. If the details enumerated in *The Prelude* are really recollected from childhood, Wordsworth possessed a remarkable auditory memory.

109. The repetition of "things" is unpleasant. Cf. 290-2, 556.

A 128. *frame*: Cf. viii. 481 n.; xiv. A 417, 450.

121. Cf. *Samson Agonistes*, 675, "That wandering loose about."

135-45. Like 166-7 and 237-69, these lines reveal Wordsworth's power of analyzing states of mind and the keen interest in psychology which prompted many of his poems. As M. Legouis remarks, in the *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth "almost

gave the precedence to psychology over poetry. . . . Poetical psychology is his triumph." <sup>4</sup> See the original preface to *The Borderers*, the 1805 note to "The Thorn" (which includes the striking utterance, "Poetry is passion: it is the history or science of feelings") and the passages quoted by Legouis (tts., pp. 405-6) from the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*. It may be significant that all of these comments were later suppressed.

146-57. This account of the requisites of a poet should be compared with the much clearer and better ones given in the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* (*Oxf. W.*, 937) and in the first paragraph of the Preface of 1815 (*ibid.*, 954). "Vital soul" (150) may mean "creative soul" (xii. 207) or "creative sensibility" (ii. 360); "general Truths" (151) may mean insight into philosophic truths; "Forms" (155) may mean knowledge of external nature or skill in handling metrical forms. On "Under-powers" (152) see de S., 600; and, for its suggestion of animism, xiv. 113 n. and Chapter v.

158-65. "I seek a time, a place, and set of customs suitable for an interesting narrative poem but, though I find many such, none of them suggests a story or a group of characters which pleases me for long." E. M. W. Tillyard remarks that Wordsworth here "stated the difficulties not only of himself but of his age. . . . *Perfect confidence*: that was precisely the lack, due to there being no longer any unquestioned authoritative mythology, such as Milton could draw on for *Paradise Lost*. Shelley and Keats have to invent their mythology; Tennyson chose a stale one: the problem was insoluble—at any rate from that side" (*Poetry Direct and Oblique*, 1934, p. 257, cf. p. 96).

166-269. The proximity of these lines to those which describe the settling at Alfoxden would naturally lead one to suppose that they refer to the period immediately preceding March 1, 1798, by which time the composition of *The Recluse* was decided on and several hundred lines of that poem were written.<sup>5</sup> But 620-5 and 636-46 make clear that the listless uncertainty described in 124-65 and 234-69 was relieved by the undertaking not of *The Recluse*, but of *The Prelude*. Now we know that parts of *The Prelude* were written in Goslar during the winter of 1798-9, and all the evidence indicates that the first book as a whole could hardly have been completed before

the latter part of 1799. Accordingly the restoration pictured in 636-46 probably belongs to the autumn or early winter of 1799 and the depression and uncertainty which it dissipated to the immediately preceding spring and summer, spent at Sockburn with the Hutchinsons.<sup>6</sup> Apparently Wordsworth laid aside *The Recluse* in March or April, 1798, and when, after his return from Germany, he tried to take it up again, urged on by Coleridge, he found himself unable to do so. This seems to be the meaning of lines 114-24. He then turned to an entirely different kind of poem, the epic or historical romance; but here, too, he was baffled. At last, recalling the autobiographical fragments he had composed in Germany, he conceived the idea of connecting and extending these and at the same time taking "a review of his own mind" <sup>7</sup> in preparation for the greater task to which as yet he felt unequal.

From 1793 to 1798, as is shown in the poems of these years and as is explained in XIII, Wordsworth deliberately turned for poetic material to the lives of humble country folk. "Of these," he had resolved, "shall be my song"

of these . . .

Will I record the praises, making verse  
Deal boldly with substantial things. (xiii. 232-5)

He had come to feel that his peculiar gift as a poet perhaps lay in treating "the actual world of our familiar days" (xiii. 279-370). Yet in the summer of 1799 he did his best to compose an important work of a totally different kind: a narrative of romantic or heroic adventure in the tradition of Spenser, Milton, and their Italian and classical models. Even the "tale from my own heart" (222) would have been "in the main lofty" and the

philosophic song

Of Truth that cherishes our daily life . . .  
Thoughtfully fitted to the Orphean lyre (229-33)

would hardly have dealt with simple men "rude in show." Clearly literary tradition had a stronger hold upon him than the *Lyrical Ballads* and their preface would lead us to suppose, and his development was not so simple, did not move so steadily

in one direction, as he has made it appear. In *The Recluse*, i. i. 749-50 (cf. also vi. 91-2) he refers to

That other hope, long mine, the hope to fill  
The heroic trumpet with the Muse's breath!

and in the lines preceding these (703-41) he mentions his love of adventure and other "wild appetites" and how slowly they were "tamed"—how reluctantly as a poet he bade "farewell to the Warrior's schemes." The activity of the epic ferment in the later eighteenth century is apparent from Southey's remark: "Young poets are, or at least used to be, as ambitious of producing an epic poem, as stage-stricken youths of figuring in Romeo or Hamlet. It had been the earliest of my day-dreams."<sup>8</sup>

It is significant that all the heroes mentioned in 186-220 fought for liberty.

174-85. A late addition, as might be surmised from the smoothness and the lack of freshness in the style.

190-202. Miss Darbishire calls attention to Alonso de Espinosa's *Del Origen y Milagros de la Santa Imagen de nuestra Señora de Candelaria, que aparecio en la Isla de Tenerife, con la Descripcion de esta Isla* (Seville, 1594), which includes an account similar to the one here given. As Espinosa's work was first translated in 1907 Wordsworth presumably derived the story from some English or French volume based on it.<sup>9</sup>

221. *invent*: This is better than "shape out" in A since it makes clear that he considered making up a story something like that of the Wanderer or of the Solitary in *The Excursion*. In the de S. n. to 220-4 read "143-4" for "134-5."

225-8. Substituted for A 224-9. The figure is changed and the repetition of "then" and "last" is eliminated. Cf. *The Tempest*, iv. i. 150-5, especially "melted into air . . . baseless fabric [cf. A 226] . . . dissolve . . . this insubstantial pageant."

234-7. On May 1, 1805, Wordsworth wrote of *The Prelude* to Sir George Beaumont:

It is not self-conceit, as you will know well, that has induced me to do this, but real humility; I began the work because I was unprepared to treat any more arduous subject, and diffident of my own powers. Here, at least, I hoped that to a certain degree I should be sure of

succeeding, as I had nothing to do but describe what I had felt and thought; therefore could not easily be bewildered.

Cf. 612-46. His autobiography seemed to him the least important of the three long poems he planned.<sup>10</sup>

238-42. "... Unable to distinguish the vague desire to write an important work (which may originate in my very inability to achieve it) from an inner urge, ultimately irresistible, to compose a poem of this kind; ability without courage from recognition of my limitations; procrastination from wise delay." The passage from 237 to 269 is a subtle analysis of the mood of dejection and morbid introspection which beset Wordsworth not only in the summer of 1799 (the period here described) but much of the time from 1793 to 1796 and not infrequently thereafter (see de S., 587-8).

259. *hollow*: Unsound.

269. This line marks the notable beginning of MSS JJ and V. The ease and naturalness with which the introduction merges with the biography proper is the more remarkable in view of the interval that elapsed between the composition of the two parts. The following passage and most of the remainder of the book, which Wordsworth never excelled, were probably written in Goslar in his twenty-ninth and thirtieth years.

271-7. Note the emphasis on sound (82-5 n.).

A 277. In later editions the de S. note reads: "the river that flows through Derwentwater and Bassenthwaite, and joins the Cocker under the walls of Cockermouth Castle." See v. 480-90 and "To the River Derwent."

275. *holms*: Flat, low-lying ground by a river.

A 279-81. This extreme claim for the ministry of nature is found in all the earlier texts but not in the later.

A 287-8. In omitting the name Cockermouth and other details given in A, the final text reverts to the two earliest, JJ and V. See viii. A 228-43 n.

290-2. Note the repetition of "a summer's day" and "basked." Presumably the coolness of the climate and of the water accounts for the omission of swimming from the Hawkhead sports.

301-2. It should be observed that each episode except the next, hunting bird's eggs, is preceded by a passage emphasizing its significance (340-56, 401-24, 461-75, 499-505, 544-58) and that, except in the present instance and 499-505, these comments are found in the earliest manuscripts and thus are not moralizing interpretations added later but were conceived along with the episodes to which they are attached. These incidents are told not for themselves but for their contribution to the poet's development.

302. *fear*: See Chapter III.

306-25.

. . . Wordsworth's attachment to nature in her grandest forms. It grew out of solitude and the character of his own mind; but the mode of its growth was indirect and unconscious, and in the midst of other more boyish or more worldly pursuits; and that which happened to the boy in mimicing the owls happened also to him. In moments of watching for the passage of woodcocks over the hills in moonlight nights, in order that he might snare them, oftentimes the dull gaze of expectation, after it was becoming hopeless, left him liable to effects of mountain scenery under accidents of nightly silence and solitude, which impressed themselves with a depth for which a full tide of success would have allowed no opening.<sup>11</sup>

311-12. See *Evening Walk*, 20 and Wordsworth's note.

A 318-19, 351-72, variants in MSS JJ and V. See Chapter v.

317. *dwelt*: See de S., xlv and n. and pp. 72-3 above; cf. 394 and n.

321-5. See Chapters III, v.

326-39. See Chapter III and cf. viii. A 396-7.

329. *the end*: "The actual result or the end proposed by Nature. Their 'object' was . . . taking birds' nests, but the means employed were so full of adventure and spiritual excitement that the result was important in his imaginative development." Nowell Smith

A 333-8. This delightful passage was presumably omitted not because the style is somewhat jerky but because the profusion of details distracts attention from the meaning of the episode, its contribution to the poet's development.

335. *Shouldering*: Applied figuratively to "the blast"; the climber, facing the crag would not press against it with his shoulder.

340-1. See de S., lviii n. These lines are explained by those that follow: experiences unpleasant and even harmful in themselves are necessary if our natures are to have depth and beauty, just as discords are necessary to rich harmonies in music. Cf. iii. 482-96; vi. 35-41, 314-16.

341-4. Perhaps an echo of Coleridge's critical principle of the reconciliation of opposites; cf. xiii. 1-10 and n. For Wordsworth's emphasis on unity see ii. 221 n.

344-400. See above, Chapter III. Viscount Grey, commenting on this incident and on i. 321-5, remarks: "There is no trace that he felt any fear of being found out, no trace that he dreaded human censure . . . and so you will find throughout 'The Prelude' an almost abnormal indifference to human censure." <sup>12</sup>

350-1. *end . . . means*: Correspond to "end," "object" of 329.

351-6. Substituted for ten lines in A and thirteen in V. Wordsworth distinguishes three classes of "visitings" according to the amount of fear they cause. Concerning the "genii" in JJ and the "Spirits" in V see Chapter v.

A 364. *A favor'd Being*: Cf. V variant of A 490-2, "Your favourite"; iii. A 82, "I was a chosen Son"; iii. A 89-90, "I . . . to majestic ends was strong"; expressions that were wisely dropped. See also 52-4 n., vi. A 263, vi. 261-4; and *Recluse*, i. i. 674-5, 686-9, 700. Without such strong self-confidence Wordsworth would never have achieved the independence which marks his life and his poetry. Miss Fenwick found nothing in him more remarkable than "the constant and firm persuasion of his own *greatness*" (Harper, II, 407). But see ii. 74-5.

A 364-5. *earliest dawn Of infancy*: Cf. 405-6 (A 432-3).

355-6. The omission of "and so she dealt with me" (A 371), presumably because Nature did not employ "severer interventions" exclusively with him, still further obscures what was entirely clear in V ("They guided me: one evening led by them"): that the following episode illustrates the chief means used by Nature in Wordsworth's development, the ministry of fear. Other references to the fact that in the main it was the sterner ministrations which moulded the young Wordsworth may be found in 301-2; ii. 306-10; iv. 248-53; vi. 557-9; xiv. 243-52, 282-9; *Recluse*, i. i. 703-25.



357-400. "The excitement and strangeness of the enterprise must have been increased tenfold by the circumstances—he was on a holiday expedition, he stole out alone, taking the unknown shepherd's boat, on a strange lake."<sup>13</sup> Mr. Aldous Huxley regards this experience as an example of Nature's refusal to "partake of our moods": "She turns round on the human spectator and gives him something utterly unlike his gift to her, reveals herself as a being either marvellously and beautifully, or else, more often, terrifyingly alien from man. In one of the finest passages of 'The Prelude' Wordsworth has recorded this most disquieting experience." He then quotes i. 340-400.<sup>14</sup> More discerning is Sir Herbert Grierson's interpretation of the incident as one "in which Nature *does* reflect our moods . . . [and] takes on herself the guardianship of the moral law; the 'craggy steep' becomes to Wordsworth a paler reflection of what Mount Sinai had been to the Israelites."<sup>15</sup>

A 373-81. See Chapter I.

393-4. A less significant expression than A 420-1, although the change may have been made merely to eliminate "was" (de S., xlv and n.). On "darkness" see v. 598 n.

398-9. In the transcript of this passage which Dorothy included in her letter to Coleridge of December, 1798, or January, 1799, there are commas after "forms" and after "men,"—which seems to dispose of Professor Garrod's suggestion.

357-400, 425-463. In her letter to Coleridge of December, 1798, or January, 1799, Dorothy included a version of these passages which differs in several particulars from the A text. Two of these differences are noted in de S., 26, 28. Others are the omission of "(surely I was led by her)" from A 372, of A 376-8, and of "—happy . . . rapture" from A 455-7; the use of "Just" for "Even" (A 387), of "fitted" for "suited" (A 396), of "shaggy" for "craggy" (A 398), of "twenty times" for "lustily" (A 401), of "rocky" for "craggy" (A 405), of "my" for "the" (A 426), of "far" for "the" (A 469), of "sideways" for "sideway" (A 476), and of "winds" for "wind" (A 479).

401-63. When these lines were published in *The Friend* they were given the title, "Growth of Genius from the Influences of Natural Objects, on the Imagination in Boyhood and

Early Youth"; when they were included in Wordsworth's poems this was changed to "Influence of Natural Objects in Calling forth and Strengthening the Imagination in Boyhood and Early Youth." Wordsworth's emphasis on the relation of the experience to the imagination is significant.

401-4. "Spirit of wisdom! thou that art the soul of the universe and the embodiment of what the human mind grasps as eternity! Thou that givest life and constant movement [or, everlasting existence] to the ideas and forms which thou conceivest!" This is one of Wordsworth's many attempts to express his conception of the Eternal Spirit; he avoids "God" because of anthropomorphic and ecclesiastical connotations and because he is thinking less of a personality than of a vast creative and guiding intelligence of which he can form no definite conception. Had he been invoking the *anima mundi* he would hardly have used the terms "Wisdom . . . of the universe" and "eternity of thought." See Chapter IX and cf. ii. 257; iii. 120-4, A 130-1; v. 14-17; vi. 133-9; de S., 508, 512; "Tintern Abbey," 100-2:

A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things.

Lines 403-4 seem to imply the Platonic doctrine of the world of ideas and of the material existence given by the Infinite to approximations of these ideas. These vague, lofty conceptions take the place of the primitive, animistic way of thinking, which found expression in JJ and V: "Ye Beings of the hills, And ye that walk the woods" (see Chapter v).

404-14. "Wordsworth's idea is that images which have excited feelings in us of love, joy, fear, wonder, move through our minds thenceforth like living things. It is of great moment what images are linked with our earliest and strongest feelings. If the images are great, beautiful, and mysterious, the feelings themselves will be purified and sanctified" (H. Darbishire, *op. cit.*, p. 57). Cf. xii. 261-71 and notes. In *Excursion*, iv. 819-24, Wordsworth says of the shepherd-lad:

Imagination—not permitted here  
To waste her powers, as in the worldling's mind,  
On fickle pleasures, and superfluous cares,

And trivial ostentation—is left free  
 And puissant to range the solemn walks  
 Of time and nature.

406, 407, 413. *me, our, we*: The change from singular to plural is confusing but logical. In the first instance he is speaking only of himself; in the others of mankind in general.

407-24. The emphasis on the emotions should be noticed (see Chapter II above). By "the beatings of the heart" is meant what Arnold in his essay on Wordsworth calls "the simple primary affections and duties." On 405-14 see xii. 269-70 n.; on *fear* (413) and *lonely* (418) see Chapters III and IV. Note the similarity even in phrasing (418, 422) to *Excursion*, i. 219-20,

A Herdsman on the lonely mountain-tops,  
 Such intercourse was his.

407. No punctuation is needed after "soul" since the meaning, as is clear from A, is "intertwine passions not with the works of man but with high objects."

408. This line does not necessarily mean that the works of man are in general "mean and vulgar" although this is what Wordsworth tended to think (cf. vii. 722-30, 724 n.; de S., 558, lines 194-9). He has in mind the contrast between the surroundings of a child brought up in a crowded city and one reared in the lake district.

409. *enduring things*: A similar phrase, "objects that endure," is used in a similar connection in xiii. 32. Cf. iii. 109; vi. 131 and n., 467; vii. 767-71; xi. 328-33; xiii. 29-32; xiv. 311; de S., 593 lines 42-3; *Excursion*, iii. 94-8, 397-405 ("The universal instinct of repose, The longing for confirmed tranquillity . . ."), 458 ("Mutability is Nature's bane"); iv. 62-3 ("Inspire me with ability to seek Repose and hope among eternal things"), 755-62; "To the Clouds," 92-4 ("created as we are For joy and rest, albeit to find them only Lodged in the bosom of eternal things"); "Those words," 12 ("The immortal Mind craves objects that endure"); "Hail, Twilight"; *Dud-don*, xii. 7-10; "Hope smiled," 9-14; "Vernal Ode," ii, iii (praise of the enduring and also of "sweet vicissitudes"); "Off Saint Bees' Heads," 1-3 (vicissitude classed with un-

pleasant things); references to the sea, stars, mountains, and their snow as "everlasting"; letter to Coleridge of 27 February, 1799 ("I do not so ardently desire character in poems like Burger's, as manners, not transitory manners reflecting the wearisome unintelligible obliquities of city life, but manners connected with the permanent objects of nature and partaking of the simplicity of those objects"); letter to Beaumont of October 17, 1805 ("the most valuable feelings, that is, the most permanent, the most independent, the most ennobling"); Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, *Oxf. W.*, p. 936 ("I should be oppressed with no dishonourable melancholy, had I not a deep impression of certain inherent and indestructible qualities of the human mind, and likewise of certain powers in the great and permanent objects that act upon it, which are equally inherent and indestructible"). Wordsworth's emphasis upon infinitude, upon eternal things, is due in no small part to his preference for the enduring. See pp. 242, 263 above; de S., 194, lines 26-32; *Borderers*, 1543-4; "Is this, ye Gods," 10-14 ("discern Eternal things; and . . . defy Change"). Hazlitt remarked, "The general and the permanent, like the Platonic ideas, are his only realities"<sup>16</sup>. He liked misty weather and twilight in part because they eliminated mutable distinctions and revealed the permanent; he valued silence, solitude, and lonely places in part because they were a means of communing with the permanent. Here, as usual when he speaks of the ministry of nature, Wordsworth has in mind the sublime rather than the beautiful and ignores the brief existence of most natural objects as well as the changes in the general appearance of a landscape from day to day and from season to season. See p. 106 above. So, apropos of the alleged "need for modern poets to face industrial realities," Roger Marvell remarks, "our deepest emotions are still excited by the permanent beauty of landscapes, the perishable beauty of men and women" (*New Statesman*, February 3, 1940).

410. *life*: Living things.

415. *fellowship*: Cf. "intercourse" (422), i. e., "with high objects, with enduring things" (409).

✓416-18. It is noteworthy that many of the memorable incidents in Wordsworth's life took place in bad weather; for

example those recorded in ii. 118-28; iv. 142-50; A<sup>2</sup>C variant of viii. A 396-9; xii. 253-61, 297-326; and de S., 601, lines 7-30. Note also i. 535-43; vi. 621-48, 691-722, "Stepping Westward," 9-10; and "Bleak season was it." When over seventy years old after tramping about in weather so wet that "a mackintosh was hardly proof against its insinuation," Wordsworth remarked that it had been "a beautiful, soft solemn day."<sup>17</sup> Wordsworth's enjoyment of bad weather (or his indifference to it) is akin to the pleasure he found in lonely and desolate places (see Chapter IV). In the present instance, as in several others (e. g. vii. 662-8; viii. 218-22) the two are united.

418-9. A 445-6 omits the comma after "woods" and inserts one after "noon," which seems to be the correct reading. It would also be better to omit the comma after "nights" since "'mid the calm . . ." modifies "went" (421).

425-63. "How much self-reliance it implies to write a true description of anything, for example, Wordsworth's picture of skating; that leaning back on your heels and stopping in mid-career. So simple a fact no common man would have trusted himself to detach as a thought."<sup>18</sup> In his later years Wordsworth was famous among his peasant neighbors for his skill in skating, "noan better in these parts."<sup>19</sup> On January 9, 1830, Dorothy wrote Mary Lamb, that her brother was "still the crack skater on Rydal Lake." Since to recline straight back upon the heels would be likely to throw the skater violently upon his face, Wordsworth probably turned to one side with the blade of each skate nearly parallel to the ice and at the same time leaned back upon his heels.<sup>20</sup>

✓430-44. The quality of the different sounds is carefully discriminated; see 82-5 n.

434-7. That is, they played hare and hounds and imitated the sound of the horn and the bellowing of the dogs.

444. Nowell Smith, who regards vi. 261 as "the only Alexandrine in *The Prelude*," thinks "this line was doubtless not intended to be read" as one, and compares "Wordsworth's constant treatment of the word 'spiritual' as equivalent to a dissyllable."

450. In the 1820 text of "Influence of Natural Objects" this line is "to cross the bright reflection."

459-60. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, vii. 22-3: "Within the visible diurnal sphere; Standing on earth. . . ."

464-6. Although this passage is very different from what it was in JJ and V and much loftier, the animism (see Chapter v) has been allowed to remain.

v. 469-75. The point stressed is that "intercourse" with nature made the external world a living, wonderful thing; that young Wordsworth was not indifferent but was strongly moved with desire or fear by all "forms," i. e. natural objects. Contrast xiv. 157-68, where fear is again stressed.

484-5. In "Nutting" there is a description of a "bower" (30, 50) in which "the hazels towered Tall and erect, with milk-white clusters hung" (13-14, version sent to Coleridge in December, 1798, or January, 1799). The hazel is commonly found as undergrowth in woods, especially oak woods. The brown nuts grow in clusters and are half covered by the jagged outer calyx of the blossoms, which do not drop off.<sup>21</sup>

485-90. Cf. v. 480-90; viii. 262-3.

500. *ministration*: Of indoor, domestic life and "home-amusements" (508).

504-5. Note the repetition of "plain."

509-13. I suppose this game is what in my boyhood was called "tit-tat-toe, three in a row"; Professor Garrod (p. 31) names it "noughts-and-crosses." It is to be hoped that 513 was intended, like 516-17, as a bit of mock-heroic humor; 511 seems to be a kind of parody of Milton's "with centric and eccentric scribbled o'er" (*Paradise Lost*, viii. 83).

516-35. Quiet humor of this kind is not rare in Wordsworth's poetry: see ii. 96-101; iii. 23-9, 37-42, 305-11 (note 570-81); iv. 209-30; vii. 93-8, 166-7, 274-87, 421-9; *Excursion*, i. 180-5; "Michael," 188-93; also his letters to Wrangham of April 26 and July 16, 1814, and January 18, 1816, to Rogers of May 5, 1814, and May 13, 1817, and to H. C. Robinson of April 26, 1829. Probably 522-35 preserves some examples of the "boyish wit" mentioned in 529. The variants of A 554-61 are interesting, especially that for A 561 found in V. This humor makes the lines that follow more effective by contrast.

543. *Bothnic Main*: The Gulf of Bothnia, which is at the northern end of the Baltic Sea. Presumably a recollection of something Wordsworth read in the books of travel which delighted him (see iii. 433-44 n.).

545. *extrinsic*: Because the passion was not for nature but sport: trapping, boating, skating, . . . as illustrated in 306-478. Natural objects and natural phenomena which were associated with such sports as yet meant little to him but they were impressed upon his memory (546, cf. 592-602) and, being connected with pleasant experiences, came in time, according to Hartley's principles, to be beloved. Cf. 602-12; ii. 50-54, 183-203; viii. 340-5. In the early part of VIII, especially 116-20 (A 166-78 is clearer), Wordsworth ascribes to association the early development of his love for nature, but makes no mention of sports. In the lines in I that immediately follow this one (548-80), he points out that his love was not entirely due to association but was partly "of subtler origin," since even as a boy he sometimes felt delight in natural beauty for its own sake. In 553-8 he attributes this delight to pre-existence; in 567-80 he mentions one instance of it which he affirms (573-6) owed nothing to association.

551-8. The earliest version of this passage, that is JJ (de S., [608 C], 508), contains a number of additional lines which make the meaning clearer: Delight in nature is a survival of the affinity for nature which the child soon comes to feel, because the Eternal Spirit has painted Himself in nature and because He sends such affinities or sympathies into the child's brain. [Perhaps we are also to understand that the child feels affinity with the beauty of nature because it has just left the world of beauty.] This delight in nature reconciles the child to life by showing it that joy may be found in earthly existence. Cf. v. 512-22. Pre-existence is implied or referred to in iii. 180-3; v. 507-22, 536-8; xii. 180-3, 274-80 and possibly in *Excursion*, ix. 36-44,—which shows that the idea meant more to Wordsworth than the Fenwick note to the Immortality Ode implies. This account of the origin of the child's love of natural beauty is contrary to Hartley's theory of association. The JJ version makes clear that by the beginning of 1799 Wordsworth, at least at times, conceived of God not pantheistically but as a

Spirit whose Life is "in unimaginable things" and who reveals himself in the visible world.

553. *intellectual*: Non-associational, abstract; see 545 n. Cf. ii. 315 n.; xii. 45 n.; xiii. 52 n., 178 n.; A<sup>2</sup>B<sup>2</sup> variant of xiv. A 96-7; xiv. 168-202 n., 188 (where "spiritual" replaces "intellectual" in A) and 207; also Shelley's "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty." "Intellectual" is not inconsistent with "organic" (564).

555-6. Cf. Immortality Ode, 152, "those first affections." The "f" alliteration is unpleasant (see iii. 28 n.), as is the repetition of "exist."

A 589-90 [562-3]. *intercourse With the eternal Beauty*: This Platonic conception was probably suggested by the Platonism of the preceding passage—in which this same intercourse may be implied as an aspect of pre-natal life. With the final version, in which the idea is changed by the removal of the Platonism, compare ii. 308-9 and especially "Hail, Twilight, sovereign of one peaceful hour!"

564. *Organic*: See 553 n. and cf. iv. A 395-9 and "Tintern Abbey," 27-8, "sensations sweet, Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart."

567-80. Sir Herbert Grierson regards this passage, and to a less extent 438-63 and ii. 164-74, as

the purest expression of this intense consciousness of the beauty and the life of nature, the purest in the sense that there is no intellectual reaction, no endeavour under the influence of the feeling to interpret, to give it a prophetic significance . . . but [he adds] to his deep sensibility, his strong and healthy sense of life, this beauty became more than sensuous beauty. It became as it were the outward manifestation, the expressive countenance of a life as full, as intense, as joyous as his own, but greater, sublimer.<sup>22</sup>

A 598 [571]. Two weaknesses characteristic of the early version (de S., xlv) are eliminated in the later: the unnecessary auxiliary and the excessive use of "sweet."

572. *fancies such as these*: The reference, as is clear from A 600, is to 570-1. JJ and V, which (in place of 574) have "No body of associated forms," emphasize even more than the later texts that the experiences here described are not to be



explained by the associational psychology of Hartley (see 545 n., 551-8 n.).

581-612. There is much repetition here: "vulgar joy . . . is forgotten" reappears in 597-8 and A 635; 609 repeats 594-5 just as "happiness" does "pleasure (604)"; 592-3 say much the same thing as 599-602 and 544-6 (cf. V variant of v. A 472); and 604-12 adds only, what might well be taken for granted, that the scenes thus impressed upon the mind became dear. But 601-2 seem to contradict 594-6.

585-8. A more striking expression of what is said in 549-53 and in the lines in JJ which precede 551 (de S., 508).

613-14. *not . . . infirmity*: Eliminates the unpleasant alliteration, "feeling . . . fear," is more euphonious, more pompous, and less clear than A 641-2.

615. *Disowned by memory*: A surprising phrase in the mouth of one who professed to remember many incidents of his boyhood in great detail. Note the variant in E and cf. 606-7, 634-5, and "Vaudracour and Julia," 31 (de S., 339). It must mean that only general impressions and occasional incidents are recalled, as in "Tintern Abbey," 33-5,

. . . that best portion of a good man's life,  
His little, nameless, *unremembered*, acts  
Of kindness and of love.

631-5. The book might well have ended, somewhat as iv, vi, vii, x, and xiv do, with these beautiful lines. The pedestrian passage that follows although it serves the esthetic purpose of concluding the book on the note with which it began (124-269), might better have been incorporated with 620-5. We do not need both. "Visionary things" (632): things seen in a vision; cf. *Excursion*, iv. 111-12, "What visionary powers of eye and soul In youth were mine." The admirable figure in 634-5 recalls vaguely lines 165-71 of the Immortality Ode.

640-4. See 234-7 n., 124-269.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, New York, 1925, p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> See note 1, p. 335 below

<sup>3</sup> "Wordsworth's 'Hermitage': Racedown or Grasmere?" *Studies in Philology*, xxxii (1935), 483-507; "The Origin of *The Prelude* and the Composition of Books I and II," *ibid.*, xxxviii (1941), 494-52. Mr. Bishop thinks the A text of I and II was composed in 1801.

<sup>4</sup> See *Studies in Philology*, xxxiii (1936), 55-6

<sup>5</sup> *Cambridge History of English Literature*, xi, 101, 111.

<sup>6</sup> See Wordsworth's letters to James Tobin of March 6, 1798, and to James Losh of March 11, 1798.

<sup>7</sup> Coleridge wrote Wordsworth October 12, 1799. "I long to see what you have been doing. O let it be the tailpiece of 'The Recluse' for of nothing but 'The Recluse' can I hear patiently. That it is to be addressed to me [as *The Prelude* was] makes me more desirous that it should not be a poem of itself." Since Wordsworth had been remarkably productive at Alfoxden and Goslar, lines 144-5 and 267-9 can refer only to the summer and perhaps the autumn of 1799.

<sup>8</sup> Preface to *The Excursion*.

<sup>9</sup> Preface to *Joan of Arc* in *Poetical Works*, 1837, i, xvii.

<sup>10</sup> *The Prelude*, Books I, II, and parts of v and xii, edited by Helen Darbishire, Oxford, 1928, p. 54. *The Guanches of Tenerife* by Alonso de Espinosa, translated and edited by Clements Markham (Publications of the Hakluyt Society, second series, xxi, 1907), pp. 27, 81-108.

<sup>11</sup> Letters to De Quincey of March 6, 1804, to Beaumont of December 25, 1804, to Richard Sharp of February, 1805.

<sup>12</sup> De Quincey, "William Wordsworth," *Literary Reminiscences*, Boston, 1851, i, 313-4. Not in Masson.

<sup>13</sup> "Wordsworth's 'Prelude,'" *Fallodon Papers*, Boston, 1926, p. 151.

<sup>14</sup> H. Darbishire, edition of *Prelude*, i, ii, etc., Oxford, 1928, p. 56.

<sup>15</sup> *Texts and Pretexts*, 1932, pp. 58-60

<sup>16</sup> *Milton and Wordsworth*, Cambridge, 1937, p. 167 n.

<sup>17</sup> *The Round Table*, 29, "Observations on 'The Excursion.'"

<sup>18</sup> Edward Quillinan's letter to H. C. Robinson of December 9, 1843 (*The Correspondence of H. C. Robinson with the Wordsworth Circle*, ed. E. J. Morley, Oxford, 1927).

<sup>19</sup> Emerson, *Journal*, iv, 398.

<sup>20</sup> See H. D. Rawnsley, "Reminiscences of Wordsworth among the Peasantry of Westmoreland," *Wordsworthiana*, 1889, pp. 98-9.

<sup>21</sup> Suggested to me by J. Q. Wolf, Jr.

<sup>22</sup> I am indebted to D. J. Savage for the substance of this note.

<sup>23</sup> *Milton and Wordsworth*, Cambridge, 1937, pp. 163, 166.

## BOOK II

BOOK II continues the account of the years at Hawkshead, which lasted from May, 1779, to October, 1787 (age 9-17½). It was probably completed in the latter half of 1799. We are not sure that any of it was written in Goslar and lines 1-54a, which are not in MS V, almost certainly were not. Lines 54-174 narrate boyish adventures which, although of a less introspective nature than those in Book I that we know were composed in Germany, may well be the product of the same period. The remainder of the book, since it is much more abstract and philosophic, was probably influenced by Coleridge—as 216-19, written between the summer of 1798 and February, 1800, almost certainly were (see de S., 512-13). The conclusion (451-71) Professor de Selincourt thinks (p. xxxiv) was composed after mid-November, 1799,<sup>1</sup> "when the two friends separated from their walking tour in the Lake Country"; 203-65 were perhaps the result of discussions during this tour; 302-22 date between January 20 and March 5, 1798, and are thus among the earliest parts of *The Prelude* to be written; 1-54a may well belong to the latter part of November, 1799; see 36-7 n.

To the list of MSS for Book II should be added: "*for II.* [A] 321-41 Alfoxden Note Book."

3-4. These are pleasanter lines than A 3-4 and they make it clearer that the original purpose of I and II is to trace the growth of the love of nature and its contribution to Wordsworth's development. Contrast xiv. 193-205, 302-6, which probably represent a later conception, but see pp. 277-9 above.

19-28. See xiv. 293-6 n.

28. *corporeal frame*: Cf. "thither I repaired" (37), "less grateful else" (53), "selected bourne" (57), "umbrageous covert" (60), and "hence corporeal strength Unsapped by delicate viands" (80-1), "steed" (97). Expressions still more turgid were removed from A 75, A 87-9, A 256. Edward Whately said of Wordsworth's conversation, "Both his sen-

tences and his words were too long and too high-flown to suit the subject he was discussing . . . he used the most high-flown language in speaking of the most common-place, ordinary affairs of life."<sup>14</sup> As Coleridge's letters are frequently open to the same criticism, such language may have seemed more natural to the two poets than it does to us.

28-33. See i. 135-45 n.

30. *self-presence*: Like "underpresence" (see de S. n. to xiv. A 71), a characteristic expression. The Wordsworth *Concordance* lists many of these compounds with "self," a number of which are unusual.

36-7. Wordsworth, his brother John, and Coleridge visited Hawkshead early in November, 1799, and ii. 1-54 may well have been written not long thereafter.

A 38-40. Most of these details are omitted from the final text. "Wash" is whitewash, "rough-cast" is "a composition of lime and gravel, used as a plastering for the outside of walls" (NED).

41-5. *Yet . . . her*: Of these thirty-eight words only two, "happy" and "starry" are polysyllables. There are many monosyllabic lines in II (8, 17, 38, 73, 154, 178-9, 183, 208 [note 207], 396, 406, 427, 432), a number in III (105, 114-15, 182 [note 180, 181, 183], 200, 241, 437, 491-2, 542) and at least two in I (12, 433). A few of the many other instances are vi. 36, 237, 242; viii. 12, 21, 25-6, 39, 241, 245, 310, 315, 590, 675; x. 191, 226, 363, 383, 394-5 (note 393); xi. 67, 176, 282, 362, 382, 452; xii. 21 (note 22), 60 (note 59); xiii. 350, 370 (note 369); xiv. 26, 37, 39, 218, 378, 382, 425. Many lines are monosyllabic save for a single dissyllable: ix. 245, 248; xiv. 90-1, 355-6, 377, 380-1, 422, 430-1, 450. It is only when each word must be pronounced separately, as in most of 42, that the effect is monosyllabic; usually two or three words are so run together in reading as to give the effect of a single polysyllable. Wordsworth wrote Hans Busk, July 6, 1819:

In regard to monosyllabic lines, I do not think that there lies any objection to them merely as such; I mean any objection on musical considerations. For the words, if well *chosen* and suitably united, blend into each other upon the ear, as readily almost as if the feet of the verse were composed of polysyllables.

His matter-of-factness, his desire to be simple and direct and "to adopt the very language of men" are probably responsible for some of his unpleasantly monosyllabic verses.

48-54. Wordsworth here distinguishes an attitude toward nature intermediate between that described in i and that noted in ii. 198-202, 277-81. In this stage although nature is not yet sought for her own sake, only those sports satisfy which are connected with nature. This distinction, however, seems no more applicable to the incidents that follow than to most of those in i, nearly all of which are related to nature. But doubtless many of the sports of his earlier boyhood had little or no connection with woods and streams. Such, he here assures us, now no longer pleased. What distinguishes the episodes in i from those in the first part of this book is that the latter picture excursions some miles from Hawkshead.

51. *collaterally*: Cf. JJ and V versions of i. A 572-3.

52. *holiday*: Vacation, not Christmas holidays.

A 60, A<sup>2</sup>B<sup>2</sup> variant. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, iii. 38-9, "as the wakeful bird Sings darkling"; iv. 165, "cheer'd with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles."

63-5. Although these lines are quite different from A 64-5, and better, they probably describe the same place.

65-72. The beauty of the scenery (note A 71-2), particularly of the islands which were the goal ("so ended"), aided by the absence of prizes or of any emphasis on victory was such that the evils of emulation<sup>2</sup> were removed. Even so, it is hard to believe that "disappointment could be none . . . or pain, or jealousy"; v. 411-19 and xiv. 331-41 give a different and more probable picture. At Hawkshead, since the boys were not urged to excell one another but were taught to look inwards not outwards for standards in judging themselves, they developed a quiet independence; diffidence and modesty ensued since the victor's pride and vain-glory were tempered (69-71). Wordsworth himself, although as Mr. Harper remarks (II, 323) "curiously compounded of timorousness and courage," was not modest (see i. A 364 n.). On his "over-love Of freedom" see vi. 32-3 n.; on his wilfulness see iii. 355 n. How all this is connected with solitude is not explained but independence and self-sufficiency, which the Hawkshead training

developed, are essential to the enjoyment of solitude. Possibly, reverting to the first part of the paragraph, Wordsworth has in mind the influence of natural beauty in encouraging the love of solitude. See iii. 230-6; "Dion," 12-13 ("not too elate With self-sufficing solitude"); and Chapter iv.

74-114. The final text escapes the wordiness and the stilted language of A 75, A 87-93, A 101, A 105-9, A 117-18 and improves on the sequence of A 79-82 by making the literary, affected, and unnecessary A 79 [80-1] less conspicuous. It does not, however, remove the creaking machinery of A 99, so characteristic of the matter-of-fact side of Wordsworth (see Chapter I). The grandiose language of 96-7 may be intended humorously—98-101 is certainly humorous. The reference to the Druid temple (see iii. A 82-92 n.) is not in A.

78. *Sabine fare*: "Such simple country fare as Horace partook of on his Sabine farm."<sup>3</sup>

82-6. "*The 'weekly stipend'*: paid by Ann Tyson, began at threepence and rose to sixpence as the boys grew older. Sums varying from 5s. 3d. to one guinea were paid to the boys at the close of some vacations. The half-yearly holidays came at Midsummer and Christmas, lasting approximately from 20 June to 4 August, and from 20 December to 20 January. See 'The Boyhood of Wordsworth,' by G. G. Wordsworth, *Cornhill Magazine*, April 1920."<sup>4</sup>

A 96, V variant. These pompously expressed lines mean that the enjoyment of food stimulated the enjoyment of scenery.

A 98. *sweetly*: See de S., xlvi.

103-28. The last two of the "Miscellaneous Sonnets" likewise deal with Furness Abbey, but much less notably than do these fine lines.

108. *more than inland peace*: In contrast with the rough wind overhead and the surf near by (admirably described in V and M variants of A 120-1), the valley seemed more peaceful than any inland spot could be. In view of the V M variant of A 120-1, V and M must lack (or change) A 118 and perhaps A 119 [112],—a line characteristic both in expression and ideas of Wordsworth's peculiar power.

115-37. Here as often Wordsworth succeeds in fusing into a harmonious whole elements apparently so incongruous as the

feeling of boyish glee and physical vigor, a poignant sense of natural beauty, and intimations of something more.

118-28. Note the attention to sound (see i. 82-5 n.), the memorable experience taking place in bad weather (see i. 416-18 n.), and the *single* wien (see pp. 55-6 above). Compare Shelley's *The Assassins*, chapter 1: "The coldest slave of custom cannot fail to recollect some few moments in which . . . the song of some lonely bird perched on the only tree of an unfrequented heath, has awakened the touch of nature." "Touched" (121) modifies "ivy" (124).

133-4. *felt Your presence*: A characteristic expression, as if the boy were conscious of a personality in the rocks, streams, and evening air. For Wordsworth's use of "presence," often tinged with animism, see Chapter v.

138-74. This and the excursion to Coniston, an account of which (see de S., 563-4) precedes these lines in v, were made possible by the "weightier purses" mentioned in 86.

140. The White Lion, which has for many years been known as The Royal Hotel, is now surrounded by shops and houses. At the head of the stairs is a lounge which occupies part of the old bowling-green and in front of which a small, level grass-plot may still be seen.

145. *the Hall*: Mr. Gordon Wordsworth informed me that the reference is to an imposing circular house built of stone about 1770 on what is usually called "Belle Isle." It is still standing.

164-74. Cf. "There was a Boy" (v. 364-88).

173. In the first edition of de S. "and" was inserted, by mistake, before "sank"; this was later removed.

175. There should be a new paragraph here as in A, since lines 1-13 of the B<sup>3</sup> variant of A 181-3 make clear that 175-7 refer not merely to the immediately preceding passage but to Wordsworth's entire development up to this time. A new stage in this development begins with the next paragraph. "Thus" accordingly means by boyish fun in scenes of natural beauty and by rare occasions when beauty unrelated to sports moved him. "Sympathies": mental and spiritual powers, as is clear from lines 1-5 of the B<sup>3</sup> variant of A 181-3.

176. *visible things*: Natural objects, see B<sup>3</sup>, lines 6-13.

A 181-3, B<sup>s</sup> variant. This third draft, which includes everything in variants (1) and (2) and which extends to 38 lines, was omitted probably because it adds further confusion to a paragraph that, as it stands, has little enough unity. In itself, however, the passage has considerable interest and beauty; it clarifies 175-7; and tells us, what is not recorded in the revised *Prelude*, of the fascination the sky held for the boy Wordsworth. Cf. "To the Clouds."

A study of the facsimile of the original manuscript (de S., between pp. xviii and xix) will reveal several unimportant unrecorded variants: semicolons after "strengthened" (2) and "me" (7); the second line has been crossed out and the eighth, eleventh, seventeenth, and eighteenth added later; and there is a form of 31 not mentioned in the de S. n. Other readings not easily deciphered will be seen in 21, 27, 28, 32-3.

Line 3. The active and contemplative powers; cf. xiii. 1-10.

Line 17. *curious patience of regard*: A subtle bit of introspection, see i. 135-45 n. The facsimile shows an illegible variant.

Lines 21-2. Awkward, jerky lines; "with the lofty winds" modifies "hurrying."

Lines 25-30. *yielding, Crowning, Whispering, and listening* all modify "that" [cloud] of line 22. The nine lines (25-33) about the lonely cloud (cf. "The Daffodils") seriously interrupt the course of thought.

Lines 32-3. *From . . . Escaped* is parenthetical.

183-8. "Beauty," which is brought in as part of a periphrasis for sunrise, is somewhat misleading since 186-91 suggest that "thoughtless" (186) means almost "indifferent to beauty" and that as a boy Wordsworth loved the sun mainly because it was associated with many hours of "glad animal movements." Here, as in the passage that follows, he is making a new application of the principle laid down in Book I and is explaining much of his love of nature by Hartley's doctrine of association. It should be observed that by attributing to association much of the origin of what was for him one of the greatest things in life, he lowered significantly the importance of reason.



189-97. Wordsworth came to love the moon [not because it was beautiful or inspiring but], as he loved his country, his family [or Anne Tyson's cottage, because it had been associated with many happy experiences and] because it seemed, as he used to gaze upon it, a part of the valley he loved. In his *Guide through the Lakes* (Giosait, II, 255) he remarks: "The beauty of the heavens and their connexion with the earth are most sensibly felt" in deep contracted valleys with which the lake region abounds, and "in the night-season also, the narrowness of the vales, and comparative smallness of the lakes, are especially adapted to bring surrounding objects home to the eye and to the heart."

✓ 198-203. Wordsworth now passes to a new and important stage in his development—the third if we count ii. 48-54 as the second—that in which he sought nature for its own sake; cf. i. 464-75, 544-7; ii. 177-88. According to viii. 345-64, this period lasted into his twenty-second year, when man became first in his affections. Love for beast or bird come even later. "Incidental charms" are the pleasures of boyish sports.

✓ 203-75. Wordsworth no sooner begins his account of this new stage in his development than he interrupts himself to decry analysis and the marking off of stages which rests upon it. Consciousness, he insists, is a unity and to trace the growth of one mental trait or tendency apart from the others is to falsify it and its growth, since they are part of it and it would not have grown in the way it did if it had not been for them. Furthermore, to mark off stages of development is to say that certain thoughts and feelings began at a certain time whereas they all go back to the very beginning of the individual mind.<sup>6</sup> Wordsworth then indicates how the child at the breast, under the stimulus of its mother's love, begins to respond to stimuli from external nature and how even at this early period it is an active as well as a passive agent, creating as well as receiving. This dual activity of the child, receiving from nature and creating out of what it receives, is the earliest poetic activity; but, since in most persons it is checked or crushed by custom and by "the inevitable yoke" of later years, few persons continue to be poets (cf. de S., 556, lines 120-4, and ii. 358-62; xiv. 157-62). Since the new period in his development which

Wordsworth is about to describe is marked by an *active* attitude towards nature he may wish to remind us that this active principle exists in the child. He returns a little later (358-418) to this important principle and to the unity it discovers.

So abstruse a passage as this might be supposed to be a late addition, but it is found in V, the earliest manuscript we have for this book and, with one exception, the earliest for any part of the poem. Clearly *The Prelude* was, *ab ovo*, a philosophical work.

¶203-32. Wordsworth here disparages analytical reason and in the following paragraph, by implication, contrasts it with the unifying (A 246-50) and creative power of the imagination. "Reason," said Shelley, "respects the differences, and imagination the similitudes of things."<sup>6</sup> Distrust of analysis is expressed again in 376-82, xii. A 121-37, xiii. 216-20, in "The Tables Turned," 26-8 ("Our meddling intellect Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:—We murder to dissect"), in the Letter to Mathetes (Grosart, I, 325—youth's "appropriate calling is . . . not to analyze with scrupulous minuteness, but to accumulate in genial confidence"), and in *The Excursion*, iv. 957-68:

Enquire of ancient Wisdom; go, demand  
Of mighty Nature, if 'twas ever meant  
That we should pry far off yet be unraised;  
That we should pore, and dwindle as we pore,  
Viewing all objects unremittingly  
In disconnection dead and spiritless;  
And still dividing, and dividing still,  
Break down all grandeur, still unsatisfied  
With the perverse attempt, while littleness  
May yet become more little; waging thus  
An impious warfare with the very life  
Of our own souls!

A little later in *The Excursion* the reason is contrasted with the imagination and attacked:

Access for you  
Is yet preserved to principles of truth,  
Which the imaginative Will upholds  
In seats of wisdom, not to be approached  
By the inferior Faculty that moulds,

With her minute and speculative pains,  
 Opinion, ever changing! . . .  
 The estate of man would be indeed forlorn  
 If false conclusions of the reasoning power  
 Made the eye blind, and closed the passages  
 Through which the ear converses with the heart.<sup>7</sup>

Obviously this disparagement of analytical reason is part of the anti-rationalism which marked Wordsworth's reaction from contemporary French thought and Godwinism; see Chapter VII.

Wordsworth opposes psychological analysis because it cannot be accurate, inasmuch as no single thought or general tendency has in any individual a definite beginning or single source, and because the mind is not a mechanism but an organism, the parts of which are vitally inter-related and therefore when studied "in disconnection dead and spiritless" are misunderstood. Analysis, he felt, was passive and destructive ("We murder to dissect"), the work of the *Verstand*, whereas "the real apprehension of things is a creative and not a mechanical process. Taking things to bits, and regarding them singly, we never know them."<sup>8</sup> So Goethe:

Das preisen die Schüler aller Orten,  
 Sind aber keine Weber geworden.  
 Wer will was Lebendigs erkennen und beschreiben,  
 Sucht erst den Geist heraus zu treiben,  
 Dann hat er die Theile in seiner Hand,  
 Fehlt leider! nur das geistige Band.  
*Encheiresin naturae* nennt's die Chemie,  
 Spottet ihrer selbst, und weiss nicht wie.<sup>9</sup>

The passage is more vigorous in the early text, which omits "officious" (215), has "In weakness, we create distinctions" in place of 217, and "outward shows" instead of "formal arts" (220).

205. The commas in A 210 make it clearer that in "round and square" Wordsworth continues the geometrical figure of the preceding line and does not intend this figure to apply to splitting a province.

212-15. "Whether . . . he [Wordsworth] means by 'science' the discursive intelligence in all its operations, or physical

science in a strict sense, it is difficult to see how he could write of it as a 'sucedaneum' or 'prop.' For it was precisely as a succedaneum, something we fall back upon, a substitute source of power, that it had failed him. . . . Yet he continued to cleave to this sentimental view of science." <sup>10</sup>

de S., 512, lines 10-11. Cf. iv. A 392-5.

lines 24-8. These lines like the similar A 418-30 seem to be pantheistic, although the latter passage is not incompatible with a belief in the transcendence of the deity, which lines 18-19 of the fragment before us suggest. "Themselves Are god" may mean that nature is a part of God, not that there is no God apart from it. In a rough draft such as this the small "g" may have no significance, but Wordsworth is not thinking of the God of Christianity. See p. 188 above. A fourth of the "essential features" of "this state" (de S., 513) is the sense of "the unity of all."

✓221. The apprehension of unity is through the imagination. In his preface of 1815 Wordsworth quoted with approval Lamb's characterization of the imagination as the faculty which "draws all things to one; which makes things animate or inanimate, beings with their attributes, subjects with their accessories, take one colour and serve to one effect." <sup>11</sup> Thus the creative, unifying force of the imagination is contrasted with the destructive analysis of reason. An illustration of the early workings of this unifying power is given in the first version of the following paragraph (A 245-50). It was apparently in his seventeenth year that, through coming to feel one life in all things (386-418), Wordsworth became conscious of this unity.

Other references to unity are i. 341-4; vi. 636-40; X variant of vii. A 432-4; viii. 608-11, 665-72; xiii. 216-18 (see note); xiv. A 253-5. See also de S., 512-13 and *Excursion*, ix. 1-15 (p. 194 above). The unifying power of the imagination is discussed on pp. 207, 210, 212-15 above.

Coleridge is referred to in the paragraph we are considering and in the one which mentions "the mighty unity In all which we behold, and feel, and are" (xiv. A 254-5). This is not surprising since "whatever changes Coleridge's philosophical opinions underwent, one thing remained fixed and constant,

the guiding star of all his wanderings, namely, the necessity of reaching a view of the world from which it could be grasped as the manifestation of a single principle, and therefore as a unity." <sup>12</sup> Numerous passages in Coleridge's prose and poetry bear out this statement but two must suffice:

The prime object of all reasoning is the reduction of the many to one and the restoration of particulars to that unity, by which alone they can participate in true being on the principle *omne ens unum*.

In order to obtain adequate notions of any truth, we must intellectually separate its distinguishable parts; and this is the technical *process* of philosophy. But having so done, we must then restore them in our conceptions to the unity, in which they actually co-exist; and this is the *result* of philosophy.<sup>13</sup>

Dean Inge has some observations that recall 203-32:

I do not like the quasi-personification of our faculties which is so common in discussions on the borderland between metaphysics and psychology. Men champion the cause of the Will, or the Intellect, or the Feeling, as if they were three rival powers contending for the supremacy over our lives. The unity of our personality is often lost sight of.<sup>14</sup>

222. The comma after "doubt" should come, as in A, after "me." The meaning is "share my doubts."

A 241-50. The unifying power of feeling; contrast this with the disjunctive tendency of reason pointed out in xiii. 216-20. Both are referred to in xii. A 81-8. Note that the emphasis on feeling appears in 237 and 255. In the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (*Oxf. W.*, pp. 938-9) Wordsworth remarks, "The Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society."

A 244-57. Presumably in order to simplify and clarify his argument Wordsworth decided to omit these lines on the influence of the mother's love in stimulating the recipient and unifying powers of the child and to add an illustration (245-51) of his more important point, its creative powers. The unifying power is, to be sure, creative but it is not here spoken of as such. The following passage although it illuminates Wordsworth's thought, presumably owes nothing to it:

The mother, already enriched with reason and love, bending over her infant, does not by her glance, her smile, her touch, give it a soul, a spirit, a reason: and yet in that glance, that smile, that touch, soul, spirit, reason, are as surely born as the physiological life of the same child is born, and so far as we know is only born, in the congress of male and female . . . it is the mother's and father's look and touch, charged with the fruits of life, . . . which kindles into flame the dull materials of humanity, and begins that second birth, that spiritual parenthood which . . . should be the peculiar glory of human father and motherhood.<sup>15</sup>

A 253. *his mind spreads*: Cf. iii. 117-18.

A 256. *apprehensive habitude*: An obscure, pedantic expression fortunately not in the final text, which seems to refer to the mother's constant, loving solicitude for the child.

243-4. In *Spectator*, 571, Addison wrote: "Every particle of matter is actuated by this Almighty Being which passes through it. The heavens and the earth, the stars and planets, move and gravitate by virtue of this great principle within them." Cf. also *Spectator*, 120.<sup>16</sup>

245-61. This difficult passage though unrewarding esthetically is valuable for Wordsworth's thought. The child does more than merely receive sense impressions from nature; he transforms them. The primrose to which he points is not simply a yellow primrose to him since it has been glorified by the mother's love. Thanks to this love the child can, in a small way, create as the Infinite creates. He may work as an agent of the Infinite and hence in alliance with natural objects which likewise are permeated by the Infinite. It should be observed that for Wordsworth there was no such thing as pure sense impressions since even the earliest and simplest of these are modified by the mind of the beholder. See pp. 207, 209 above. Mr. J. W. Beach<sup>17</sup> declares that stanzas v-xi of the *Immortality Ode* are "virtually a recantation of the earlier doctrine of nature," which is expressed in these lines written six years before. But I fail to see that "in the *Ode* nature is shown as dulling and beclouding the mind." On the contrary,

The Youth, who daily farther from the east  
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,  
And by the vision splendid  
Is on his way attended.

(71-4)

In the sixth stanza of the Ode, Wordsworth means by "earth" not nature but the world; it is the world that does its best to make man "forget . . . that imperial palace whence he came." The present passages does, however, present a very different picture of the child from that painted in the Ode and in certain lines in *The Prelude*.<sup>18</sup> There is no suggestion here that the infant is a "best Philosopher" endowed by its previous existence with priceless wisdom; apparently its mind is a *tabula rasa* and time brings, not loss as in the Ode, but gain. In the Ode, however, he is thinking of intuitive truths, with which the creative activity of the child's imagination has nothing to do; they are recollected from previous existence.

The idea of the active or creative power of the mind (which, together with that of the unity of all and of the limitations of analytical reason, constitute the three most important conceptions of *The Prelude* that are first advanced in this digression, 203-76) is the most marked of Wordsworth's departures from the associationalism of Hartley and other eighteenth-century philosophers. Locke had asserted that one could no more conceive a new idea than one could make new matter;<sup>19</sup> and, despite the frequent use of the term "creative" after 1750, particularly by critics interested in original genius, it seldom meant more than "inventive," "ingenious in producing surprises, in arranging the old cards in a somewhat new way." According to Hartley the mind is passive and does not form ideas; they are built up in it mechanically by sense impressions and their association. Similar conceptions were generally held when Wordsworth began to write, and were presumably accepted by him before 1797. But when he found himself he turned against them as completely as he did against analytical reason. Indeed, the two seem to have been closely connected in his mind since he regarded analytical reason and taste as passive and hence greatly inferior to man's noblest attribute, the imagination, the distinguishing quality of which is activity, creativeness. He wished his own work to issue "from a source of untaught things, Creative and enduring" (xiii. 310-11) and treasured Coleridge's praise of some of his early poems for manifesting a "higher power . . . An image, and a character, by books Not hitherto reflected" (xiii. 358-60). He declared

that the power of accurately observing and describing "things as they are in themselves" is one which the poet "employs only in submission to necessity, and never for a continuance of time: as its exercise supposes all the higher qualities of the mind to be passive, and in a state of subjection to external objects." <sup>20</sup>

Of genius [he wrote] the only proof is, the act of doing well what is worthy to be done, and what was never done before: Of genius, in the fine arts, the only infallible sign is the widening the sphere of human sensibility. . . . Genius is the introduction of a new element into the intellectual universe. or, if that be not allowed, it is the application of powers to objects on which they had not before been exercised, or the employment of them in such a manner as to produce effects hitherto unknown.

Every author, as far as he is great and at the same time *original*, has had the task of *creating* the taste by which he is to be enjoyed.<sup>21</sup>

It is essential for any understanding of Wordsworth's thought to realize that, despite the value he set upon nature, he affirmed that poetry presents natural objects "with glory not their own" and repeatedly asserted that

the mind  
Is lord and master, and that outward sense  
Is but the obedient servant of her will.<sup>22</sup>

The term "creative sensibility" (360) expresses admirably both the passive and the active aspects of the poetic process: sensitivity to sense impressions and the power of transforming them. See xiv. 94-7 n. A poet, Wordsworth thought, is "endowed with more lively sensibility" than his fellows.<sup>23</sup> Such sensibility manifestly stimulates that creative activity of the artist which follows when "the discerning intellect of Man . . . [is] wedded to this goodly universe."<sup>24</sup>

Wordsworth's other chief references to the active, creative powers of the mind are 358-88; iii. A 85-8, 130-5, 144-6, 180-2; iv. 166-8; v. 599-605; vi. 736-8; vii. 679-81; xi. 128-32; xii. 201-7, 219-23, 275-7; xiv. 93-5, 106; *Recluse*, "Prospectus," 69-71 ("the creation . . . which they [the external world and the mind] with blended might Accomplish"); *Excursion*, i. 158 ("by creative feeling overborne"); i. 480-1 ("the strong



creative power Of human passion"); iii. 9-10 ("With mind that sheds a light on what he sees"); iv. 833 ("his [the shepherd's] soul creates"); ix. 1-3 ("To every Form of being is assigned . . . An *active* Principle"); "Tintern Abbey," 105-7 ("what they [eye and ear] half create, And what perceive"); *Peter Bell*, 143-5 ("the mind May in life's daily prospect find . . . or there create"); "There is a shapeless crowd," Knight, VIII, p. 230 ("recognitions, that were like Creations in the mind (and were indeed Creations often)"). See also pp. 205, 209-11 above.

255. Note that it is feeling, derived from the mother's feeling (A 243-4, A 257-8), which imparts power. Emotion is essential to the imagination, in its first and simplest as in its highest manifestations (see pp. 215-18, 220, 237 above).

256-60. It is clear from A 271-5 and from the D<sup>2</sup> variant at the bottom of p. 55 that "his mind," which was dropped in revision, is the subject of "Doth . . . Create" and the antecedent of "it." "That" (256) = so that.

265-75. A transition from the digression in 203-65 back to the main line of thought: "I have been tracing in this poem how, mainly through the influence of sports that brought me close to nature, this creative responsiveness of the infant to sense impressions of which we have just been speaking was, in my own case, kept alive and strengthened."

270. *infant sensibility*: Vivid sense impressions, delight in them, and imaginative transformation of them; cf. 360. A striking illustration occurs in a fragment of Coleridge's, see *Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism*, ed. T. M. Raysor, Cambridge, Mass., 1930, I, 201.

276-81. The "trouble" here referred to cannot be the poet's loss of his father and mother<sup>28</sup> since, for one thing, Mrs. Wordsworth died when her son was only eight—before the Hawkshead period with which these lines clearly deal—and her husband was not close enough to his children to be termed one of "the props of my affections." Furthermore, since the two deaths were separated by nearly six years they could not have produced the single impression implied in these lines. But what chiefly militates against accepting this interpretation is the phrase "from unknown causes" and the course of the poet's

thought from line 198 to the end of the book. This last point is unfortunately obscured by the difficult and confusing digression contained in 203-65. But if we turn back to the passage just before this digression, that is to 198-203, we shall see that this passage is closely connected with the lines before us and that both are concerned with the development of Wordsworth's love for nature, which is the theme of II as a whole. At first he cared for nature only because it was associated with his boyish sports, but "now" although he lost interest in these sports he sought "the visible world,"—

The props of my affections [sports] were removed,  
And yet the building [love for nature] stood

(cf. viii. 342-7). Surprise at this discovery did not, however, constitute the poet's "trouble" since that came "from unknown causes," the exploration of which was so difficult that "the chamois' sinews, and the eagle's wing" were needed, and since it seems to have arisen from his being "left alone Seeking the visible world, nor knowing why." Here, as often in *The Prelude*, Wordsworth seems to be describing as clearly and honestly as he can a state of mind or feeling which he does not understand. In the present instance this is the less surprising because he was apparently dealing with a condition far less generally recognized in his day than in our own—with the tremendous physical and mental changes incident upon puberty.)

For in the same paragraph as the lines we are considering he tells us that he "would walk alone, Under the quiet stars" (302-3), that he enjoyed storms at night and from them drank "the visionary power" as well as "moods Of shadowy exultation" (306-13). In the following paragraph he speaks of "a Friend, Then passionately loved" (333-4), of rising at dawn to sit "alone upon some jutting eminence" (343), of the marvelous things he felt at such times, when

such a holy calm  
Would overspread my soul, that bodily eyes  
Were utterly forgotten, and what I saw  
Appeared like something in myself, a dream. (348-51)

Forty lines further on he gives an ecstatic picture of the time when "all [his] thoughts Were steeped in feeling" and his

heart expanded in universal benevolence (386-418). Furthermore, in a later reference to this period "when first The boyish spirit flagged" he says that

day by day  
 Along my veins I kindled with the stir,  
 The fermentation, and the vernal heat  
 Of poesy, affecting private shades  
 Like a sick Lover.<sup>26</sup> (iv. 101-5)

Clearly we have here the familiar phenomena of adolescence. The picture of the later years of the Wanderer's youth (*Excursion*, i. 261-3, 280-300), which is presumably autobiographic, is also strongly suggestive of the tumult of adolescence. (Like most boys who are passing through the experience, Wordsworth did not know what was the matter with him. The noisy tumult of boyish play no longer satisfied and he turned—for what reason he knew not—to solitude, to passionate friendship, to vague yearnings and aspirations,—the unutterable thoughts of youth. Most of all he turned to nature:

my own pursuits  
 And animal activities, and all  
 Their trivial pleasures . . . drooped  
 And gradually expired, and Nature, prized  
 For her own sake, became my joy. (viii. 343-7)

Fortunately this new passion, "the spirit of religious love In which [he] walked with Nature" (357-8), was not only a manifestation of the physical change going on within him but an escape-valve for it and thus enabled him to avoid the morbidity from which many boys suffer during this period.

Wordsworth gives no indication as to the time when this "trouble came into [his] mind"<sup>27</sup> or as to the date of the incidents described in the passages preceding or following this one.<sup>28</sup> In 386, to be sure, 110 lines later, he remarks that when his "seventeenth year was come," that is, not long after April, 1786, or April, 1787 (see 386 n.),

To unorganic natures were transferred  
 My own enjoyments . . . with bliss ineffable  
 I felt the sentiment of Being spread  
 O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still. (391-402)

This state of mind may well have followed shortly after the one we are considering. The "trouble" can not have come later than October, 1787, since it is described in this book, "School-time," not in that devoted to Cambridge. Nor does a period much earlier than the spring of 1785 (when he was fifteen) seem probable, since it represented a turning from the boyhood sports which, according to *The Prelude*, occupied most of the time at Hawkshead.<sup>29</sup> It seems likely therefore that to Wordsworth, who was otherwise late in maturing, adolescence came late and proceeded slowly. There are indications that it may have lasted into his first long vacation from Cambridge, three years, more or less, after the "trouble" began. In his account of this vacation in iv. 231-55 he mentions the tenderness which developed at the time and of which the fourth book furnishes many illustrations. Another reason for believing that the full flowering of Wordsworth's adolescence came during the summer of 1788 is that he seems at this time to have been absorbed in dancing and in girls of his own age, an interest which is not referred to elsewhere in his autobiography or his correspondence. At least one of these dances lasted until daybreak and was marked by

Spirits upon the stretch, and here and there  
Slight shocks of young love-liking interspers'd,  
That mounted up like joy into the head,  
And tingled through the veins. (iv. A 324-7)

In this connection it may be significant that, at the opening of the sixth book when he speaks of returning to Cambridge at the end of this summer, he mentions leaving the

Frank-hearted maids of rocky Cumberland,  
You and your not unwelcome days of mirth,  
Relinquished, and your nights of revelry. (vi. 9-16)

Another thing that points to adolescence is the alternation of visionary ecstasy with moods of vague disquiet:<sup>30</sup>

Strange rendezvous my mind was at that time,  
A party-colour'd show of grave and gay,  
Solid and light, short-sighted and profound,  
Of inconsiderate habits and sedate,  
Consorting in one mansion unprov'd. (iv. A 346-50)

Wordsworth later told De Quincey that "the manners" of his fellow students at the university "were very frantic and dissolute" <sup>31</sup> and as his nature was one of "preternatural animal sensibility diffused through *all* the animal passions (or appetites)," <sup>32</sup> he may well have matured rapidly during the first eight months at Cambridge. Presumably he saw little of young women there but on his return to Hawkshead, where he knew many, his newly-aroused interest in the opposite sex blossomed "like a garden in the heat of spring" (iv. 195).

281-93. The new stage in Wordsworth's development was marked not only by the conscious seeking of nature for her own sake but, as a result of this seeking and of his increased love for nature, by closer observation and more intimate knowledge of her, especially her evanescent qualities (see iii. 136-40). Cf. Fenwick note to *An Evening Walk*:

The moment was important in my poetical history; for I date from it my consciousness of the infinite variety of natural appearances which had been unnoticed by the poets of any age or country, so far as I was acquainted with them; and I made a resolution to supply in some degree the deficiency. I could not have been at that time above fourteen years of age.

Wordsworth may well have been in error as to this date since this resolution would probably not have been made until he had written a number of poems and since we do not know of his writing poems until 1785, when he was fifteen. The marked development of fancy, which was connected with his versifying (viii. 365-475), presumably came about this time.

A 300-3. Omitted presumably because it is said less poetically in 291-2.

293. *permanent relations*: Apparently contrasted with "transitory qualities" (290) and therefore probably relations between natural objects and not between nature and man.

294. Although in 301-2 "I derived" is to be supplied, this would not fit "life" and "change," which seem to imply something like "I came to understand and enjoy." "Life" presumably means "living things," plants, animals, streams and the like, to which 288-92 and 299-301 refer. "Life, and change, and beauty" may well mean "the beauty of life and change."

The main clause of the sentence which extends from 294 to 310 is without a verb.

296-7. S alliteration.

298. *agitations*: Thrills of discovery, cf. xii. 332 n.

300. *eye*: It might be objected that in the illustration which follows the eye plays no part.

302-22. See Chapters IV, VIII, pp. 45, 114, i. 416-18 n., the sonnet, "Hail, Twilight," and *Excursion*, ix. 60-80.

✓ 305-6. *by form Or image unprofaned*: Since, owing to the darkness, almost nothing could be seen. On Wordsworth's sensitiveness to sound see i. 82-5 n.

306-10. Cf. *Excursion*, i. 288-91, of the Wanderer before his eighteenth year:

far more fondly now  
Than in his earlier season did he love  
Tempestuous nights—the conflict and the sounds  
That live in darkness.

307. A more vivid expression of "In storm and tempest" (A 322).

309. Animism, see Chapter v and cf. i. 321-5, 361-3.

✓ 310-11. The winds are again associated with "visionary power" in v. 595-6. Here Wordsworth is dealing with an experience itself—imaginative, mysterious, quasi-mystic—in v with a poetic account of such an experience. Cf. *Excursion*, iv. 110-12 ("What visionary powers of eye and soul In youth were mine"); Garrod, p. 105; "O blithe New-comer," 11-12 ("Thou bringest unto me a tale Of visionary hours"); and viii. 597-607 n.

315. *intellectual*: Since "fleeting moods Of shadowy exultation" are not kindred to the intellect, "intellectual" must mean, as often in Wordsworth, lofty, spiritual, partaking of the nobler part of our nature. This is akin to the first of the three meanings of "reason" distinguished in iv. A 296 n. See i. 553 n.; xii. 45 n.; xiii. 52 n., 178 n.; xiv. A 96-7, A<sup>2</sup> B<sup>2</sup> variant, 168-202 n., and cf. *Borderers*, 1809-10 ("mighty objects do impress their forms To elevate our intellectual being"); "Lie here," 32-3 ("in thee we saw A soul of love, love's intellectual law"); *Recluse*, "Prospectus," 17-23 ("Of moral strength, and intellectual Power . . . I sing"); *Excursion*, iv.

1273-4 ("raise, to loftier heights Of divine love, our intellectual soul").

316-19. An admirable expression of how those who have had the mystic experience feel about it. Cf. iv. 160-5 and see Chapter VIII. William James records a similar feeling, a sense of having experienced a new type of consciousness, as a result of inhaling nitrous oxide.<sup>33</sup>

324-7. The power described in 294-310, which is inherent in all natural objects, of bringing delight to men. Cf. *The Recluse*, "Prospectus," 66-88, "how exquisitely . . . The external World is fitted to the Mind." Lines 302-10 illustrate the workings of this power "'Mid gloom and tumult," 329-52 "'mid fair And tranquil scenes."

327-9. "Soul" seems to be emphatic; "its" must refer to "power." This "soul" presumably originated in the young Wordsworth's creative sensibility, to which the next paragraph returns.

332-8. One of the many digressions in *The Prelude* which distract attention from the course of thought; the greater their charm the greater the distraction. Cf. xiii. 79-220 and n. In the present case the mention of the friend may lead one to overlook an important element in the following episode, that Wordsworth was *alone* (343).

334. *passionately loved*: See *The Vale of Esthwaite*, 466-77, 542-5: "Friend of my soul! for whom I feel What words can never half reveal . . . (That vale where first my eyes surveyed Fair Friendship in thy form arrayed). . . . Till then shall live the holy flame, Friendship and Fleming are the same." This was written the summer before Wordsworth left for the university. See 276-81 n.; v. A 581-607; and perhaps v. A 492-500; John Fleming was with Wordsworth at St. John's College, Cambridge (Knight, II, 59). From v. 552-8 we learn that the friendship began when Wordsworth was ten years old, or less (A 575-6 says thirteen or less), that is, during his first three years at Hawkshead. Another friend, Jones, is mentioned in vi. 323-4; but it is only in connection with Coleridge that *The Prelude* speaks of the ministry of friendship to a poet's development. See iii. 19-21 n.; v. 168-9 n.

339-52. See Chapters IV and VIII.

344-5. More literary, less simple and moving than A 363-4 although 344 makes clear, as A 363 does not, how very early the hour was.

355. There should be no comma after "waking," which modifies "thought"; there is none in A 375.

358-76. See 245-61 n., 270; vi. 736-8. It should be observed that the subject of the following paragraph, as is pointed out in 380-2, is related to this "creative agency."

362. *unsubdued*: As, according to 262-5 and de S., 556, lines 120-4, it is in most men and as, despite xiv. 153-62, it was later in Wordsworth himself (see the Fenwick note to the Immortality Ode, "In later periods of life I have deplored . . . a subjugation of an opposite character").

364-6. Wordsworth could not summon this creative power when he wished; moreover, he could not control or predict its actions, some of which were probably capricious, extravagant, or fanciful. The meaning of 365-6 seems to be that this plastic or creative power was self-willed and at times acted contrary to the poet's usual desires and interests, and thus to his general tendencies.

366-8, 375-6. The "creative sensibility" is a form of imagination and, like the imagination, its activity is usually dependent upon the stimuli of sensations from the external world. Hence Wordsworth's "obeisance" to that world, his "devotion" to nature.

376-86. Cf. 203-32 and n., A 241-50 and n., 245-61 and n.; xiii. 217-20 and n. Here, as in his previous attack on the passive, analytical faculty, Wordsworth contrasts it with the more poetic and creative power which unifies "by observation of affinities." "Passive" (386) is an improvement on "common" (A 405). The passage that follows illustrates this unifying power "for in all things now I saw one life" (A 429-30, cf. 220-1, "To thee . . . The unity of all hath been revealed"). The awkwardness of 379-82 is probably owing to the necessity of composing transitional lines to connect two passages, at least one of which had been written earlier and without regard to its present context.

386. *My seventeenth year was come*: This may mean "during my seventeenth year" (April 7, 1786-April 7, 1787) or,



"when I was seventeen" (April 7, 1787-April 7, 1788) but cannot refer to a time later than the end of October, 1787, when Wordsworth entered Cambridge. The vivid consciousness of the one life in all things, which is described in the immediately following lines, was with him again during his first year at the university (see iii. 127-35). The joy that rings through lines 392, 395, 400, 406-7, 410, A 430 (cf. xiv. 293-5) may have been due in part to the companionship of his sister with whom he spent July and the first three weeks of October, 1787, at Penrith.

387. *this habit*: The habit of seeing affinities, brotherhood, in objects (384-6).

387-418. See pp. 170-1, 178, 184-5 above. It should be observed that 395-418 is "steeped in feeling,"<sup>31</sup> that it represents an emotion rather than a conviction ("felt," 401, is important), that the early as well as the final texts of 387-92 and 419 express considerable doubt as to whether this feeling corresponded to any objective reality, that a similar doubt is expressed in iii. 127-9 and *Excursion*, i. 157-9,<sup>32</sup> as to similar experiences, and that the passage ignores the "wholesome separation" of feeling and observation which is recommended in xiv. 344-7. Yet it was no passing fancy for it reappears in several of the later books. One of these (viii. 476-9—A 623-39 is clearer) refers to this passage and gives the additional information that in this period of Wordsworth's development man "rose . . . to a loftier height; As of all visible natures crown."

It may be well to distinguish the four closely-connected feelings that appear in these and in related lines; (1) the feeling of joy in all things (see the conclusion of note to 386); (2) the feeling of life in all things (401-18; iii. 130-33; viii. 476-85—cf. also vi. 774; xiii. 290-1; xiv. 293-5); (3) the feeling of *one* life in all things (A 429-30; iii. A 130-1; de S., 512, lines 18-28, and perhaps *Excursion*, ix. 1-20—see pp. 194-6 above); (4) the "observation of affinities In objects," which is related to the creative and opposed to the analytical faculty and which leads to the belief in the unity of all without regard to the source of this unity (376-86, cf. 215-65 and notes). Akin to (3) is the feeling which often came over Wordsworth in boyhood when he was "unable to think of external things as

having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature" (Fenwick note to Immortality Ode). A 420-30 may express pantheism or the belief in an immanent and transcendent deity but A 422-4 seems to imply the latter. Note the anti-intellectualism of these lines. In 1794 Wordsworth spoke of "a heart that"

sees not any line where being ends,  
Sees sense through Nature's rudest forms betrayed,  
Tremble obscure in fountain, rock, and shade.<sup>36</sup>

388-90. The gregarious principle that forces us to share our enjoyments with others and to assume that others feel as we do (cf. iii. 128-9 and n.). Owing to an excess of this principle in Wordsworth he shared his enjoyment also with things, or believed that things felt as he did. Cf. iii. 235-6, "my heart Was social."

405. *heart*: See p. 140 above.

406. An effective monosyllabic line; 396, 427, 432 are verbally but not rhythmically monosyllabic. See 41-5 n.

415-19. This fading of the consciousness of sense impressions is characteristic of much of Wordsworth's intercourse with nature and still more so of the workings of his imagination and of his mystic or quasi-mystic experiences. See 348-52; iv. 160-2; vi. 599-601; "Tintern Abbey," 43-6; and Chapters vi, viii, and x.

419. *error*: See 387-418 n.

419-26. These lines recall "Tintern Abbey," 49-57, especially as in each case the immediately preceding lines contain much the same idea; the two passages may have been written about the same time. See also de S., 509 (i. A 577-93 n.).

427-51. See Chapter vi. The high claims here made for the ministry of nature recall "Tintern Abbey," 107-11, just as 440-45 and 456-60 recall lines 125-34 of the same poem. The justice of such claims must rest largely on 447-51, which express what was, for Wordsworth at least, an undoubted fact. "Pure in heart" (427) is from *Matthew*, v. 8; the meaning is not "chaste" but "free from moral defilement of any kind." With 446 compare 425.

451-64. Some of these lines are similar to some of those in vi. 254-305. The more important of the other references to Coleridge in *The Prelude* are ii. 210-27; vi. 237-318; xi. A 905-8, 375-470; xiii. 352-65; xiv. 275-82, 392-429. See also de S. note to xiv. A 247-69.

465-6. Coleridge's poems and travel diaries of the years when he was most intimate with the Wordsworths bear out this statement. After his return from Malta it was very different.

466-71. See de S., xxxiv, second paragraph. The last twenty lines of this book are undistinguished, as is the conclusion of I but not that of most of the other books.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Professor de Selincourt writes, "after October", but later, in his note to Wordsworth's letter to Dorothy of November 7, 1799, he observes: "W. W. and C. were at Grasmere Nov. 3-7." In this same letter Wordsworth remarks, "I think it will be full ten days before we shall see you."

<sup>2a</sup> "Personal Recollections of the Lake Poets," *Leisure Hour*, October 1, 1870.

<sup>2</sup> See iii, 500-5 and the de S. note, also the letter to Charles Wordsworth of March 12, 1846.

<sup>3</sup> H. Darbishire, edition of *The Prelude*, I, II, etc., Oxford, 1928, p. 59.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 59-60.

<sup>5</sup> "How opposite to nature and the fact to talk of the 'one moment' of Hume, of our whole being an aggregate of successive single sensations! Who ever felt a single sensation? . . . And what is a moment? Succession with interspace? Absurdity! It is evidently only the *licht-punct* in the indivisible undivided duration" (Coleridge, *Anima Poetae*, 1895, pp. 102-3).

<sup>6</sup> *Defence of Poetry, Works*, ed. Forman, vii, 100

<sup>7</sup> iv. 1126-55. The Argument to Book IV in the 1814 edition has these words: "Happy for us that the imagination and affections in our own despite mitigate the evils of that state of intellectual Slavery which the calculating understanding is so apt to produce." Wordsworth wrote Mrs. Clarkson, in December, 1814, "One of the main objects of *The Recluse* is to reduce the calculating understanding to its proper level among the human faculties."

Coleridge remarked: "As deleterious . . . as, always to be peering and unravelling contrivance may be to the simplicity of the affection and the grandeur and unity of the imagination . . ." (*Anima Poetae*, October 26, 1803), and he wrote Southey, August 11, 1801 (*Unpublished Letters of Coleridge*, ed. E. L. Griggs, 1932, I, 180): "I had one very affecting letter from [Humphrey] Davy, soon after his arrival in London—and in this he complained in a deep tone of the ill effect which perpetual analysis had on his mind. . . . I think those most likely to be *permanently* useful also must cherish their best feelings." John Stuart Mill declared analytic habits to be "a perpetual worm at the root both of the passions and of the virtues; and, above all, fearfully undermine all desires, and all pleasures, which are the effects of association" (*Autobiography*, Published from the Original Manuscripts, New York, 1924, p. 97). On the various meanings of "reason" in Wordsworth's poetry see iv. A 296 n.

<sup>8</sup> James Fotheringham, *Wordsworth's "Prelude" as a Study of Education*, 1899, p. 37.

<sup>9</sup> *Faust*, 1934-41; freely paraphrased: "Analysis is everywhere prized by scholars, but among them no original, creative thinkers are to be found. The man who wishes to know and describe what is alive begins by driving out the life; he then holds in his hands the parts but not the unifying spirit. This process chemistry, unwittingly making itself ridiculous, calls 'manipulation of nature.'" Mrs. Edward Hooker called my attention to this passage.

<sup>10</sup> D. G. James, *Scepticism and Poetry*, 1937, p. 165.

<sup>11</sup> *Oxf. W.*, p. 957. From "On the Genius and Character of Hogarth," Lamb's *Works*, ed. Lucas, I, 73.

<sup>12</sup> J. H. Muirhead, *Coleridge as Philosopher*, New York, 1930, p. 60.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 84 (it is not clear where the passage is found in Coleridge's writings); *Biographia Literaria*, chapter XIV (ed. Shawcross, II, 8). See also Gordon McKenzie, *Organic Unity in Coleridge* (University of California Publi-

cations in English, vii, 1939, 1-108), *Biographia Literaria*, chapter xii (ed. Shawcross, I, 187), letter to Thelwall of October 16, 1797, "Religious Musings," 126-8, 402-8, "Destiny of Nations," 39-49; "Eolian Harp," 44-8; *Modern Language Notes*, XLVII (1932), 114; and, below, xiv. 66-99 n.

<sup>14</sup> *Studies of English Mystics*, 1907, p. 28

<sup>15</sup> William Wallace, *Lectures and Essays on Natural Theology and Ethics*, Oxford, 1898, p. 114

<sup>16</sup> De S., Addenda, quoting T. E. Casson's article in *Review of English Studies* for April, 1927.

<sup>17</sup> *The Concept of Nature in Nineteenth-Century English Poetry*, New York, 1936, p. 155

<sup>18</sup> See I. 551-8 n

<sup>19</sup> *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, II. ii. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Preface of 1815 (*Oxf. W.*, p. 954).

<sup>21</sup> "Essay, supplementary to the Preface" (*Oxf. W.*, pp. 952, 951) Cf. 955-7.

<sup>22</sup> v. 604-5; xii A 271-3. *The Prelude* ends in a similar strain, see xiv. 448-54 n.; cf. also xiii. 287-90 and Wordsworth's letter to Beaumont of October 17, 1805, in which he speaks of the heart as "conferring value on the objects of the senses, and pointing out what is valuable in them." The subject is discussed on pp. 95-6, 122 above. "W. must know," Blake wrote in a copy of Wordsworth's *Poems*, "that what he writes valuable is not to be found in Nature" (*Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. Keynes, 1927, pp. 1024-5). Wordsworth did know it.

<sup>23</sup> Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (*Oxf. W.*, p. 937).

<sup>24</sup> *Recluse*, "Prospectus," 52-3.

<sup>25</sup> See Arthur Beatty's *William Wordsworth* (University of Wisconsin Studies), 2 ed., 1927, p. 295; Legouis trs., p. 51; and W. L. Sperry, *Wordsworth's Anti-climax*, Cambridge, Mass., 1935, p. 168 n.

<sup>26</sup> For the date of the experience described in these lines see iv. 93-135 n.

<sup>27</sup> "Now" (276) seems to mean no more than "at this stage of my development"

<sup>28</sup> I do not refer to 203-65, which is not personal—232-65, for example, deals with infancy in general not with Wordsworth's early years,—but to the lines preceding 203 and following 284.

<sup>29</sup> He "passionately loved" Fleming in the summer of 1787 although the friendship began at least three years earlier. See 334 n.

<sup>30</sup> For the first see iv. 137-90, 239-55, 307-38, 370-469; for the second, 276-97 (A 268-304 is more detailed).

<sup>31</sup> Letter of March 6, 1804.

<sup>32</sup> De Quincey, *Literary and Lake Reminiscences*, iii, *Collected Writings*, ed. Masson, II, 246.

<sup>33</sup> *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, New York, 1917, pp. 387-8, 390-1.

<sup>34</sup> W. H. Hudson writes of his sixteenth year: "I had lived till now in a paradise of vivid sense-impressions in which all thoughts came to me saturated with emotion, and in that mental state reflection is well-nigh impossible" (*Far Away and Long Ago*, chapter XXII).

<sup>35</sup> Or from the power of a peculiar eye,

Or by creative feeling overborne,

Or by predominance of thought oppressed,

the Wanderer, as a boy, "traced" in caves and "the hollow depths of naked crags . . . an ebbing and a flowing mind."

<sup>36</sup> Addition to *Evening Walk* first published in Professor de Selincourt's "Early Wordsworth," *English Association*, Presidential Address, 1936, pp. 20-1.

### BOOK III

WORDSWORTH'S first year at Cambridge, October, 1787, to July, 1788, when he was seventeen and a half to eighteen and a quarter years old, is described in III. A general survey of his entire stay at the University is also included together with his ideas on advanced education. It is likely that some phases of thought and feeling, some part of the development here referred to the first year, belong in reality to the two and a half years that followed. Wordsworth's memory, amazingly retentive of details both physical and psychological concerning events that seemed to him spiritually significant, was notoriously inaccurate as to dates; and in the present case he may well have thought that dates did not matter. At any rate the states of mind pictured in 90-196, which are in ill accord with the gaiety and "submissive idleness" emphasized in 35-45, 233-58, 506-11, 619-34, and iv. 153-9, were probably less frequent in the first year at Cambridge than in "the ensuing time" when "the bonds Of indolent and vague society Relaxing in their hold" he lived more to himself, "read more, reflected more, Felt more, and settled daily into habits More promising" (vi. A 19-25).

Sydney Smith, who was at Oxford about the time Wordsworth was at Cambridge and who can hardly be accused of undue seriousness, wrote in later life, "the only consequences of a University education are the growth of vice and the waste of money"; and said of a friend who had sent his son to Cambridge:

He has put him there to spend his money, to lose what good qualities he has, and to gain nothing useful in return. If men had made no more progress in the common arts of life than they have in education, we should at this moment be dividing our food with our fingers, and drinking out of the palms of our hands.<sup>1</sup>

This unfavorable impression receives dispassionate and authoritative confirmation in D. A. Winstanley's *Unreformed Cambridge, a Study of Certain Aspects of the University in the*

*Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1935). A more favorable picture is painted by Professor Harper, who shows that the poet's brother seems to have derived profit as well as pleasure from Cambridge, that St. John's College was one of the best, and that "if Wordsworth had been inclined to purely scholastic pursuits, particularly in theology or mathematics, he need not have complained."<sup>2</sup> But he was by no means so inclined; and fifteen years later, as he looked back upon his idle days at Cambridge, he felt that the blame lay chiefly with the University. For he held with Emerson: "Colleges . . . have their indispensable office,—to teach elements. But they can only highly serve us when they aim not to drill, but to create; when they . . . set the hearts of their youth on flame."<sup>3</sup>

In part the fault was his own; he was indolent, averse to regular, set tasks, and over-fond of liberty. He confessed as much frankly (350-62, vi. 188-9) and later explained: "I had a full twelvemonth's start of the freshmen of my year [in mathematics], and accordingly got into rather an idle way; reading nothing but classic authors according to my fancy, and Italian poetry. My Italian master. . . . As I took to these studies with much interest, . . . was proud of the progress I made."<sup>4</sup>

In middle life he composed three sonnets on King's College Chapel, Cambridge, and a fine one on Oxford beginning "Ye sacred Nurseries."

Although containing much less great poetry and deep thinking than the two preceding and the three following books, III is in the main pleasant and interesting. Wordsworth lingers over his Cambridge days with a love that he is unwilling to confess, much less to justify. The care-free life, the "budding-time Of health, and hope, and beauty," the spacious dignity of the noble buildings rich in memories of the past were to him "a goodly prospect" (222-9, cf. 47-52 n.) and the "deep vacation" appealed strongly to "that majestic indolence so dear To native man" (viii. 255-6.) This grudgingly acknowledged pleasure and the penetration with which he views his university life give the book much of its value and charm. In one way the experience was unique: it was the only period when he was in relatively affluent circumstances and when for

any considerable time he lived something approaching the aristocratic life. This may have had its value. Book III offers less of universal and permanent significance than many parts of *The Prelude* because it deals largely with local and temporary conditions and with matters which contributed little to Wordsworth's development. Some will wish that III gave consideration to the value for the poet of academic training, but Wordsworth felt that he derived little from such training and throughout *The Prelude* he ignores or minimizes his own conscious intellectual efforts as well as the part that such labors have played in the lives of nearly all poets. The picture he gives of the formal education of a great philosophical poet—for so he regarded himself—is amazingly unintellectual.)

Professor de Selincourt, assuming that (aside from IX) the books of *The Prelude* were written in the order in which they now stand, believes that 100-200 lines of III were composed between December, 1801, and January, 1803, and the rest in January and perhaps early February, 1804. But on March 6, 1804, Wordsworth wrote De Quincey concerning the poem, "I . . . have just finished that part in which I speak of my residence at the University"; and in a letter of the same day to Coleridge he said, "I finished five or six days ago another Book of my Poem, amounting to 650 lines" (in A, III has 672 lines). Since in the letter to De Quincey Wordsworth says he has completed four books, it seems not unlikely that one of those that now come later, presumably V, was written before III and in the period to which Professor de Selincourt assigns III; and that III was composed during the latter part of February, 1804. Yet in MS W rough drafts of parts of IV, which describe the first university vacation, precede and hence presumably antedate drafts of passages later incorporated into V. It should be observed that V properly belongs before III since it deals with the reading and the education of a child and since III supplements this by treating the education and, to some extent, the reading of a university student. Surely it is illogical to put the satire on infant prodigies and the plea for Jack the Giant-killer *after* the account of the first year at the university and of the summer devoted mainly to dancing and the like. Furthermore, two of the most impressive incidents narrated in



v, "There was a Boy"—which extends to 62 lines—and the finding of the drowned man, are of the period dealt with in i and ii and would therefore come more suitably immediately after these books than eleven hundred lines later.

1-17. Verbally these opening lines are close to the beginning of x, "It was a beautiful . . . day . . . When . . .," but in method they are really closer to iv. 1-26 since both iii and iv begin with a picture which introduces us, without explanation, to a new manner of life. The first sixty-nine lines of viii are much the same and xiv starts with an incident not with explanation or comment; but neither of these books pictures the scene of a new development.

19-21. Knight points out (ii, 59-60) that at least three of Wordsworth's schoolmates at Hawkshead were at Cambridge while he was there, that one of these was Fleming of Rayrigg, the friend "passionately loved" (ii. 332-8), that all three seem to have made good records, and that Wordsworth's friend Wrangham (not from Hawkshead) did unusually well. Wordsworth was capable of the more intense sort of friendship but it would seem from 237-58 and 506-11 that, except in his close and lasting intimacy with Jones (see vi. 323 n.), he did not experience it at Cambridge. He wrote Basil Montagu, October 1, 1844: "My *intimate* associates of my own college are all gone long since. Myers my cousin, Terrot, Jones my fellow-traveller, Fleming and his brother, Raincock of Pembroke, Bishop Middleton of the same college,—it has pleased God that I should survive them all."

28. The alliteration may be introduced to bring out the humor of the passage, although in most instances Wordsworth's use of alliteration was probably unconscious: 32, 516-17, 599, 604; i. 525; ii. 441-2; iv. 326, 348; viii. 232, 245, 248; ix. 57-8; xii. 246-7; xiii. A 333-4, xiii. 336. He could hardly have intended such unpleasant instances as i. 555; X variant of vii. A 734; x. 31-2, 50-1, 124, x. A 55, A 556; xi. A 944-5, xi. 388; xii. A 10-11, A 260; xiii. 330; xiv. A 18, A 49, A 69; yet he seems to have become aware of some of them since he removed a number in revision.

30. So sudden and so great was the change that it seemed unreal, a dream. In viii. A 640 the same word is used in speaking of the change to the life at Cambridge.

37-42. Humor; see i. 509-35 n.

47-52. When Wordsworth showed Miss Fenwick his "abiding-place" at Cambridge she pronounced it "one of the meanest and most dismal apartments in the whole University." "But here," the poet replied, "I was as joyous as a lark" (Harper, II, 409).

A 57. It is amazing that the author of so superb a passage as 58-63 should originally have put into it so pedestrian a line as this. See Chapter I above and vi. 115-67 n., 115-28 n.

A 69-76. Most of this is wisely omitted from the final text—the wordy, monosyllabic, and pedestrian A 69-70, A 72-3, the double negative "not seldom" (A 75), the unnecessary (since it but repeats 78-82) A 76—but the involved, passive construction of A 71 (cf. x. 327) is retained. "Melancholy" (A 75)—on which see vi. 171-8 n., 342-778 n., xiv. 293-6 n., de S. note to x. A 869-70—is replaced by "prudent" (77).

77-9. Cf. vi. A 33-41.

80-2. For Wordsworth's emphasis on the mystery of the human mind and the "mysteries of being" see xii. 85-7 n. and pp. 141-6, 152-3 above.

83-9. These lines correspond roughly to A 91-3: "hither I had come with great endowments (not only intellect and the hope of a Christian such as most boys possess) but with peculiar gifts."

A 82-120. These lines, which are more explicit and frank than the corresponding ones in the final version, seem "rather [to] have been called to life By after-meditation" than to be "the naked recollection of that time" (614-16). (It would be strange indeed if a boy of seventeen who had done nothing to distinguish himself and who was to achieve nothing of note for ten years more were to feel the remarkable confidence in his peculiar gifts that is indicated in A 82-93. The introspection suggested by A 96-120 was presumably his; but whether it took on the lofty character, the concern for universals and the consciousness of "the Upholder of the tranquil Soul," described in this passage may be doubted.) To be sure we are dealing with a consciousness that was highly abnormal, but the entire account of the first year at the University would probably be more just if it were less serious.

A 82-92. The "two attempts to recast" are notable for their self-confidence and for their expression of Wordsworth's priest-like conception of his office (cf. i. 52-4 n.)—here, it should be observed, a pagan priest of "primaeval mysteries." Professor Arthur Craver of Miami University reminds me that Wordsworth's interest in Druids appears in ii. 101-2; xiii. 312-49; *Evening Walk* (1793), 171 and n.; *Guilt and Sorrow*, xiii-xv; *Descriptive Sketches*, Dedication; *The Excursion*, iii. 133, 143-8; ix. 698-709; *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, i. 3, 4, 10; iii. 39; *Duddon*, xvii; "Humanity," 7-8; "Pass of Kirkstone," 13; "To the Clouds," 60-1; *Guide through the Lakes* (Grosart, II, 257 and n., 271); "The Dog," 5; *Vale of Esthwaite*, 31-4. "The Druids haunted his imagination," writes Professor de Selincourt (*P. W., Youth*, p. 367), "long before his fateful visit to Stonehenge in 1793." Lines 6-7 of (1) would be, in prose, "As nature from the invisible shrine within the breast might urge him or as ancient story taught him to act or suffer." On "nature" (7)—which here means instinct—see 557 n.

A 82, 90. Cf. i. A 364 and n.

83-7, 101-7, 111-15, 121-3 are undesirable late additions. A 85-93 (good), A 100-1 (poor), A 104, A 117 (good) are not in the final text. There are many lesser changes: "fresh as heretofore" (97, cf. 365; iv. 136, 191) instead of "busier in itself than heretofore" (A 104, which is implied in 96-7, 116), "native instincts" (99) instead of "powers and habits" (A 106, cf. 88-9), and "What independent solaces" (101) in place of "The strength and consolation which" (A 108) are improvements.

89. *work* refers to the active, creative powers and is explained by A 87-8, "[to] work . . . mind" (cf. ii. A 245-61 and n.); *feel*, to the passive, receptive faculties and is explained by A 85-7.

90-196. See p. 337 above.

90-99 (A 94-106).

The animal's awareness of the peculiarities of its habitat is not developed unless and until it is deprived of that habitat . . . Wordsworth did not become conscious of the intimate link that existed between his character and his surroundings until that link was broken by his departure for Cambridge in 1787. Even then the full realisation of the

significance of his early mode of life did not come to him; what trace of that passionate intensity of feeling for nature do we find in *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*, his first published poems? <sup>5</sup>

Probably this is true, although it is doubtful if any inexperienced poet would, in 1793, have been able to express "passionate intensity of feeling for nature" in heroic couplets. Yet so far as I recall Wordsworth himself nowhere says this; he does not distinguish between the intensity of his love and his awareness of that intensity. Certainly he does not in these lines imply that separation from the mountains made him realize how much he cared for them. (What he says is, first, that he did not droop like a flower removed from the water but seemed as fresh as before (A 96-7 is simpler: he was soon his old self again). Second, he "more distinctly recognized" the "native instincts" of his mind, his tastes and aptitudes ("powers and habits," A 106); A 103-4 add that his mind "seem'd busier in [i. e. with] *itself* than heretofore" (cf. 116, A 112), instead of being busy with nature as would have been the case had he remained at Hawkshead, and thus came to recognize how it differed from other minds. Third, he discovered as a result of this scrutiny that he had within himself sources of strength, joy, and consolation which enabled him to rise above his environment. Fourth, he was "rous'd" and "look'd for universal things."

A 91. "When I say I was strong I am not thinking of learning . . . but of a very different kind of power which was mine."

91-6. Solitude. Cf. 210-11, 230-4, A 379, 443, and Chapter IV.

96. Cf. 116, A 103-4, and "Elegiac Verses . . . John Wordsworth," 22, "While each into himself descends."

101-3. Cf. A 89-90, A 108; ii. 262-5; iv. 166-8; xii. 219-23; xiv. 157-62 n.

✓108-26. The emphasis is strangely different from that in A 109-20, which point not to piety but to the beginnings of a more philosophical kind of meditation; to speculation as to nature, the mysteries of life, the Changeless amid the flux; and to gaining insight into highest truth.

109. *universal things*: Cf. viii. 608-11 and see i. 409 n. Wordsworth sought universals in nature and in himself (110, 116). See pp. 2, 110, 120-1 above.

119. *Incumbencies*: Cf. ix. A 68 and the de S. n. "More awful," than nature? See Chapter IX.

A 116-18. See vi. 129-41 and n.

121. *That*: A 117 and A<sup>2</sup> "Which,"—not a personal deity. Cf. A 130-1 and contrast A 144.

127-35. A continuation, as 127 implies, of the development that began the previous spring (ii. 387-418 and notes). Lines 128-9 will be clearer if "either" is inserted before "From" and "from" before "consciousnesses": either reasoning by analogy to men and animals or trusting to his own overpowering feelings about the matter (cf. ii. 388-90 and n.), he concluded that rocks and plants must have feeling, must be permeated by spirit. See pp. 170-1 and 195 above. In so far as he felt there is no dead matter he is in accord with the scientific thought of today. It is strange that Wordsworth never tried to simplify the involved, inverted style of 127-9.

132. *moral*: Supersensuous; he saw them permeated by "a quickening soul." In view of the immediately preceding and following lines "gave" cannot be taken literally but must be equivalent to "felt in."

A 130. *Presence*: Cf. "Tintern Abbey," 93-102, "I have felt A presence that disturbs me with the joy Of elevated thoughts," and pp. 74-5 above.

136. *Terror*: See Chapter III.

137-8. *Nature's . . . transitory passion*: Cf. ii. 288-90. Despite his search for universals, his consciousness of the one changeless life in all things, he was sensitive to all the transitory aspects of nature.

143-6. Cf. 237-8.

146. The orthodox conception of God is implied in the early as well as the later versions of this line.

147-9. Cf. iv. 125-30.

✓ 153-7. The intuition of prophets, poets, and primitive men is obscured and distorted "in these tutored days." Primitivism appears in viii. 129-35; de S., 558, lines 208-11; *Excursion*, iii. 918-55; *Recluse*, i. i. 625-8; and, most of all, in *Descriptive*

*Sketches*, 433-46. One aspect of the Golden Age myth appears in i. 190-202.

✓ 158-69. "The world which I had made (144-5) was not a false, dream world but was derived from keen observation of all natural phenomena, and this acute awareness of the external world steadied me (see viii. 426-32) and strictly controlled my feelings." Continuous close observation saved Wordsworth from the vagueness and unreality into which the visionary, mystic side of his nature might have led him. See Chapter I. The activity of the "bodily eye" is indicated in 136-42; its "tyranny" is described in xii. 127-51; see also xiv. 344-7.

170-3. These puzzling lines sound as if they were intended for the conclusion of *The Prelude* as it was first conceived in five books. To be sure they may refer to that "mounting" to "community with highest truth" (125-6) which is described in the immediately preceding passages (80-169); but this track was "not untrod before" (127) and it would seem that the terms here employed fitted better the great experiences of his first and last long vacations which lay ahead.

174. *divinity itself*: The creative power working within him.

175-9. See Part II: Introduction.

✓ 180-5. (This impressive and characteristic passage recalls lines 28-41 of the Prospectus to *The Recluse*, which are quoted along with similar utterances on p. 144 above. See also xii. 85-7 n. It was partly because he felt "genius, power, Creation and divinity itself" at work within him that Wordsworth was impressed with the "awful . . . might," the "genuine prowess," "of souls." It should be observed that he is here speaking of the might of the soul of the child not (as in 35-41 of *The Recluse*, "Prospectus") of the mind of the adult.)

✓ 182. Wordsworth probably had pre-existence (see i. 551-8 n.) in the back of his mind although this idea is not necessarily implied in his words. The passage is particularly close to v. 506-23 and xii. 272-82; "yoke" is used in the same connection in the Immortality Ode, 128. Like 200, 207, and A 205, 182 is made up of monosyllables as, except for a dissyllable each, are 144-5, 156, 163, 166, 169-70, 175, 183, 187-9, 192-4, 202, 204. See ii. 41-5 n.

183. While yet the world seems, not something to which they naturally belong, but a wild field where, like seeds, they have been dropped by chance.

✓186-9. Cf. xii. 279-82—the preceding lines are in each case similar. The incommunicability is due in part to the fact that in some things each soul is unique, for only what is in part shared by others can be communicated. Cf. *Recluse*, I. i. 686-8:

Possessions have I that are solely mine,  
Something within which yet is shared by none,  
Not even the nearest to me and most dear.

189-90. *make . . . powers*: "I utter something which may give hint of that might of souls (180) which cannot be expressed in words."

191-6. "I am not discouraged ('heartless,' 193) by my inability to deal with this heroic argument, to give expression to this genuine prowess (184-5), since each person will know what I want to say if he will but recall his god-like hours and his realization of [or, in which he realized?] the mighty spiritual powers that belong to man as man."

196. "In consequence of our congenital qualities as contrasted with the effects of training or cultivation." There may be something here of the conception of Nature as "the cosmical order as a whole, or a half-personified power (*natura naturans*) manifested therein." <sup>6</sup>

197. *plain*: Cf. 171, "eminence."

203. Suggests an epic invocation.

204-9. A 202-7 is clearer. Usually Wordsworth simplifies his development by omitting minor fluctuations and temporary reversions to former positions such as are described here; see xiii. 369 n. and Part II: Introduction.

206. *into*: Not "unto" or "to."

A 207. Since "Observance less devout" seems to mean that he paid less heed to what was due his inner nature, may not the "friend" of MS M be this inner self to which he had for a time "returned?"

208-9. Wordsworth is thinking of animals which change the color or the thickness of their hairy "outward coat" from summer to winter.

210-11. See 230-4 and n.

213. *forced hopes*: Does this mean that his companions or teachers or relatives induced him to hope that he would succeed in fields for which he had no aptitude and in which he had no real interest?

214-16. Vacillation, which was treason to his inner self since it weakened his mind's directness, singleness of purpose.

216-29. See p. 338 above.

✓ 230-4. Cf. 91-124, 210-12, 239, A 379, 443; ii. 76-7; and Chapter IV above, also 355 n. Line 232 is a striking expression of the effect of solitude upon Wordsworth and suggests the visions that often came to him when he was alone.

236. *social*: Cf. ii. 388-90 and n., also Wordsworth's letter to Mathews of November 7, 1794: "I begin to wish much to be in Town. Cataracts and mountains are good occasional society, but they will not do for constant companions." But contrast "Personal Talk." For "idleness" see vi. A 46 n.

237-58. See 19-21 n.

238. *pleasures*: Cf. "pleased" (231); the lonely pleasures mentioned in 231-2. See 19-21 n.

239. *mutter lonesome songs*: Repeat lonesome verse or sing lonesome songs ("mutter" implying that Wordsworth was a poor singer).

240-2. "I had never, by expressing them in verse, given myself the pleasure of reading an account of the deeper joys I found in loneliness, or thought of those joys as a subject for poetry." Wordsworth's early verse certainly gives no hint of such pleasures and probably for the reason here mentioned; see 90-99 n.

251-8. Cf. 327-9, 506-11 and n.; iv. 62-3; vi. 179-83.

259. *second act*: Wordsworth has really distinguished three "acts" (cf. A 202-7): 18-45, 90-169, and 210-58; but the first and third were so much alike that he seems to have thought of them as one.

261-72. Cf. vi. 57-63; viii. 625-8.

278-324. Further illustrations, taken from the poets, of the point made in the preceding paragraph.

286-305. Wordsworth's other references to Milton will be found in R. D. Havens's *Influence of Milton on English Poetry*,



Cambridge, Mass., 1922, pp. 179-84. Note A 305a and the vivid, amusing D<sup>2</sup>E variant of A 304-6.

A 303. *convention*: Coming together. The chapel scene that follows is keenly and vividly sketched. Part of A 316 and A 318 were later omitted.

330. Neither my inner nature nor a fortunate chance did the work of duty and zeal; cf. "Ode to Duty," 9-14.

335-53. Lines 335-6 are prosaic; 346 is stiff and awkward; and 350-3 are both. Such awkward distortions of the normal word order, probably derived from *Paradise Lost*, as are found in 345-6 are the more reprehensible because in many instances the earlier texts of these passages have the words in their natural sequence (iv. 344; v. 460, 469, 493-4; vii. 618; viii. 82, 202; ix. 230; x. 145) and also because Wordsworth himself condemned them as "the worst fault that poetry can have" (de S., xxx, n. 2).

339-44. Youth has often been stirred to rigorous self-discipline by (1) thirst for the praise of contemporaries, (2) the example of the illustrious dead, (3) libraries. In speaking of libraries as burial places Wordsworth was more truthful and less happy than he realized.

350-3. Cf. vi. 188-9.

355. *a spoiled child*: De Quincey affirmed, enviously no doubt: "Freedom—unlimited, careless, insolent freedom—unoccupied possession of his own arms—absolute control over his own legs and motions—these have always been . . . essential to his comfort." <sup>7</sup> Dorothy wrote Jane Pollard, June 26, 1791, "William . . . lost the chance . . . of a fellowship by not combating his inclinations," and on July 10, 1793, spoke of him to her as a "wayward wight." In a letter to Mrs. Clarkson of March 27, 1821, she remarked, "The will never governs *his* labours." Miss Fenwick also noted his lack of "power over his *will*" and lamented, "he cannot set himself seriously down to compose; he can do but as the spirit moves him." <sup>8</sup> See i. 135-45; iii. A 89-90, 230, 371-4; vi. 30-5, 326-35; vii. 64; xiv. 248-9; "Ode to Duty," 25-31 ("I, loving freedom . . . being to myself a guide"). See also vi. 32-3 n. ("over-love Of freedom").

358-62. The semicolon should come, as in A, before "rang-

ing" not after "captivity," since the wild bird is contrasted with the domesticated fowl. A similar figure is used in 430-47.

362-74. "Nature had so absorbed me as to leave little free space within my mind, which mind, instinctively attracted to natural objects, found them fresh (cf. 97, iv. 136, 191) and winning, but study dull. And hitherto I had done chiefly what I liked." As A 372 has "had been mine" in place of "in me ruled" (368) the reference is not to any new feelings which developed in Cambridge.

367. *books*: See A 524-30 n.

371-81. "He would not work at the studies of his university: he preferred to imagine a university in which he *would* work";<sup>9</sup> cf. vi. 184-7. Although somewhat pompous, 371-5 is briefer and better than the pretty A 375-81; of 371-2 (cf. 355 n., vi. 32-3 n.) A has only "magisterially" (380); "loneliness" (A 379, cf. 91-124, 210-11, 230-4, 443, and Chapter iv) is not in the final text.

381-401, 430-44. Wordsworth's admirable conception of what a university should be ignores the indolence, the self-indulgence, and the passion for amusement that characterizes youth; it likewise assumes a greater, a more sustained enthusiasm for the intellectual life than is common among either students or their teachers, greater indeed than he himself possessed. "Strong book-mindedness" (398), an excellent phrase, was not his, nor is it common. One of his keenest suggestions is that use should be made of the social instinct of youth (386-8). Since he approved of "majestic edifices" (384), 398-401 must refer to "plain living and high thinking" ("Written in London," 11); cf. 448-60, 474-81.

382. Inferior to A 388, which may have been suggested by *Midsummer Night's Dream*, v. i. 14-15, "as imagination bodies forth The forms of things unknown."

390. *awed*: Cf. 437 and Chapter III.

391. *power*: A 397 has "joy," a nobler motive, but note viii. 599-600.

392-3. Apparently Wordsworth felt that knowledge was not "prized For its own sake" at Cambridge by either dons (405-7) or industrious students (500-5 and de S. n.).

401-6. "If so lofty a conception of a university as this only

mocks our recreant age, let foolish and hypocritical university officials pass whatever other regulations may flatter their vanity, but . . ."

410-30. Lines 410, 426, 430 are briefer and better than A 417-18, A 432-3, A 437-9. "Till . . . service" (413-15) is not in A. "Raised a pile" (428), imagined a university. Note the D variant of A 437-9.

421. *Science*: Learning, scholarship, which were tainted by the hypocrisy of the compulsory chapel exercises. Wordsworth's general criticism of the university is given in 346-50, 371-7, 407-30, 445-81, 496-505.

430-49. Wordsworth's love of nature leads him to picture his ideal of a university and the Cambridge he knew (446-9) by means of figures drawn from nature; cf. 358-62. This passage is really a continuation of 371-401. "Sanctuary" (431) a place set apart, an asylum; cf. "bird-sanctuary."

433-44. On Wordsworth's fondness for books of travel, see de S., 555, lines 98-109; de S., 602-5, lines 60-114; *Recluse*, I. i. 703-25; Wordsworth's letter to James Tobin of March 6, 1798 (quoted, de S., xxix), and to Wrangham of early spring, 1812(?) ("The only *modern* Books that I read are those of travels, or such as relate to matters of fact"); his notes to "To H. C. Six Years Old," to "The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman," to "The Blind Highland Boy," to the Preface and to iii. 931 of *The Excursion*; <sup>10</sup> de S. notes to iii. A 442-54; viii. A 119-45; Lane Cooper, "Wordsworth's Sources" and "A Glance at Wordsworth's Reading"; <sup>11</sup> K. Lienemann, *Die Belesenheit von William Wordsworth*, Berlin, 1908, pp. 166-72. In the poems he selected for Lady Mary Lowther he included some "Lines" from Thomas James's *Strange and Dangerous Voyage in his intended Discovery of the North-west Passage*, 1633. It will be recalled that his contribution to "The Ancient Mariner" was derived from Shelvrock's *Voyage*; that his geometrician came from Newton's *Authentic Narrative* (vi. 142-54 n.); that his knowledge of the followers of Sertorius (i. 190-202) and of the Grotto of Antiparos (viii. 560-89) was probably derived from books of travel; that he was solicitous for the return of his copies of two of Gilpin's *Tours* (letter to Mathews of March 21, 1796); and that his library,

though "ill provided with works of modern fiction and poetry, was remarkably rich in books of travel, some of them ancient and rare" (Harper, II, 344). His love of wandering and wanderers (see vi. 32-3 n.) and of romance (see vii. 77-84 n.) as well as his emphasis of fear (see Chapter III) and wonder (see pp. 480-92) show that this fondness for the literature of travel was connected with things that lay deep with him. Undoubtedly it was stimulated by his intimacy with Coleridge.

448-9. *impresses . . . region*: Externally the university and the life in it seemed too showy and luxurious. The paragraph that follows brings out this by contrast. "Without," cf. "inner" (447).

✓448. *trivial*: Wordsworth's wide tolerance did not extend to triviality; see iv. 278-306 n.

482-96. Cf. i. 344-50; vi. 35-41, 314-16.

483-6. *best things . . . promise*: Even best things do not offer their best to all alike.

494-6. See A 531-41 n.; vii. A 71 n.

497-506. Much better than the flabby and wordy A 510-18. Both "timid" (497) and 503-5 are excellent late additions.

505. Cf. v. 8 and Immortality Ode, 203, "other palms are won."

506-11. See 19-21 n. Like 251-8 and 545-9, keen, good-humored, and free from Wordsworth's frequent diffuseness (see ix. 112 n.); "pillowy" is a master-stroke.

A 524-30. Books have already been referred to in 254, 340-44, 367-8, 398 (cf. also 454-7, 473-81) and are touched on again in the account of the later years at the university (vi. 23-5, 95-114)—an illustration of the desultory, casual structure of III and of other parts of the poem. Note also ix. 236-7, 335-7. For Wordsworth's reading see 433-44 n.; v and notes, *passim*; vii. 77-84 n.; K. Lienemann, *Die Belesenheit von William Wordsworth*, Berlin, 1908; Harper, I, 70-1, II, 322, and especially II, 298-9; *The Correspondence of H. C. Robinson with the Wordsworth Circle*, ed. E. J. Morley, Oxford, 1927, Appendix III, "Wordsworth's Library"; J. W. Beach, *The Concept of Nature in Nineteenth-Century English Poetry*, New York, 1936, pp. 569-77 (important). It is clear from Wordsworth's letters that he read more, cared more about books, and

was more interested in the scholarly study of them than many of his utterances would lead one to suppose. See p. 128 above.

A 526. *my own food*: Contrasted with "prescrib'd" (A 524).  
 v A 531-41. These lines are not concerned with books but with Wordsworth's unawareness of the deeper passions working round him. A 531-9 (see vii. A 71 n.) and 562-8 strengthen the impression that he matured slowly and was still, in some important respects, only a boy—which may help it explain why he gained so little from his first year at Cambridge. Undergraduate vices are touched on again in viii. 510-17, where we are told not, as here, that Wordsworth was in the main unaware of the evil about him, but that he was terrified by it. Possibly the present passage refers to his first year at Cambridge and viii. 510-17 to the later years, after the emotional development which seems to have taken place during the first long vacation.

A 540. *under soul*: See de S., 600.

v 512-33. Here, as in 568-70, 582-97, and perhaps in 550-61, Wordsworth tries to say what he gained from Cambridge: chiefly some knowledge of social life and of the world—for the university was the great world in miniature. It also eased the transition to "the conflicts of substantial life." Lines 530-3 are unconvincing but ix. 222-32 assert what may possibly be true: the university, "a Republic, where . . . Distinction open lay to all . . . And wealth and titles were in less esteem Than talents, worth, . . . industry," strengthened his democracy.

516-19. "Mr. Oswald Doughty compares Thomson, *The Castle of Indolence*, I. xxx" (de S., Addenda). These lines are epitomized in "my visionary mind" (526). The alliteration in "Like . . . lone . . . lacking . . . looks" ["k" is also repeated in the last two] and in "far forth" is probably accidental (see 28 n.).

534. There is no "serious mood" in A.

534-49. Wordsworth seems to have been unfortunate in that apparently but one of his teachers—William Taylor, Master of the Hawkshead school, who died while he was a student there (see x. 532-52)—made much, if any, impression on him. These lines do not indicate even respect. "But the manners of the Fellows of the eighteenth century were probably more deplorable than their morals. Often of the very

humblest origin, and frequently unacquainted with any other society, they were apt to remain almost as boorish and uncouth as they had been on first coming to Cambridge." <sup>12</sup> "Unscoured" (545), like the figure that follows, is excellent. See i. 509-35 n.

550-61. This obscure paragraph, which might well have been omitted, contrasts the venerable old age of men who live close to external nature with the grotesqueness which comes from life apart from external nature and men. It suggests that Nature holds such cases up before youth because their lesson is clear to all, and further suggests that the humor which is found in "the grave Elders" is used by Nature to temper the pathos of reality and to lure the young to observe men.

A 584. *and which*: There is no "which" for "and" to connect with the "which" in the text. Cf. ix. 215, A 289; xiv. 142, A 268.

557. *Nature's*: The general mother and teacher. The following are some of the other instances in which Wordsworth uses "nature" when he does not mean the external world: ii. A 267; line 7 of variant (1) of iii. A 82-93; iii. 196, 330; v. A 106; vi. A 132; vii. 275, 356, 732; viii. A 513, 487; ix. 149, 398, 571, A 602; x. 158, 189, 205, 232, 470; xi. 30-1, 168, 251, 291, 416, A 844, A 879; xiii. 90, 102, 175, 189, 200-1, 225; xiv. A 229; *Excursion*, iii. 736-7 ("From the depths Of natural passion, seemingly escaped"), 807-9 ("Here Nature was my guide, The Nature of the dissolute; but thee, O fostering Nature! I rejected"); iv. 957-9 ("demand Of mighty Nature, if 'twas ever meant That we should pry far off yet be unraised"); vi. 871 ("nature that is kind in woman's breast"); vii. 317 ("gifts of nature"); ix. 99-105 ("kind Nature . . . may afford Proof of the sacred love she bears for all . . . far as kindly Nature hath free scope And Reason's sway predominates"); *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, iii. xx. 4 ("A Growth from sinful Nature's bed of weeds"); Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (*Oxf. W.*, p. 938: "there is no necessity to trick out or to elevate nature [reality, especially man] . . . the Poet . . . converses with general nature"); "Essay, supplementary to the Preface" (*Oxf. W.*, p. 948: Pope was "tempted . . . into a belief that Nature [realism] was not to be trusted, at least in

pastoral Poetry"); letter to John Wilson of June, 1802 ("feelings more sane, pure, and permanent, in short, more consonant to nature, that is, to eternal nature"); second letter to H. J. Rose, probably of December, 1828 ("What more sacred law of nature . . . than that the mother should educate her child?"); letter to Dora of early April, 1838 ("engagements so little in accordance with nature and reason"). See also the three essays upon epitaphs (Grosart, II, 51, 54, 55, 60, 64, 65).

562-76. With 562-8 compare iv. 301-3; 568-70 condenses the eight lines of A 596-603 into three; 572-6 omits A 605-6 and makes much clearer the comparison to a puppet show.

594-7. "All degrees" is the subject and "Retainers" the object of "fed"; "won away," enticed.

600-11. "An extraordinarily powerful passage," Viscount Grey.<sup>18</sup> In the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth attacks personifications of abstract ideas but adds: "They are, indeed, a figure of speech occasionally prompted by passion, and I have made use of them as such" (*Oxf. W.*, p. 936). Note the alliteration (cf. 599 and see 28 n.) and the succession of nouns (see vi. 505 n.) in 604.

612-16. Like iv. 256-73, these lines are important for their bearing on the question as to how far *The Prelude* represents the Wordsworth of the time of composition rather than of the time described—in the present case some sixteen years earlier. Cf. "Nutting," 48-9, "unless I now Confound my present feelings with the past." Perhaps i. 614-16 (and the earlier form of the same lines, E variant of i. A 643-4), lines 6 and 7 of V variant of v. A 472, vii. A 147-8, X variant of vii. A 734, and viii. 292-3 have a similar meaning. See pp. 280-2 above.

619-31. An admirable figure, unduly prolonged in A. The final text omits A 653-7 and adds the effective repetition, "neighbourhood . . . unneighbourly" (624-5).

632-3. "Idleness" and "labouring time" are contrasted.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Hesketh Pearson, *The Smith of Smiths*, New York, 1934, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Harper, I, 54-62 De Quincey wrote: "St. John's ranks as the second college in Cambridge—the second as to numbers, and influence, and general consideration" (*Literary and Lake Reminiscences*, III, *Collected Writings*, ed. Masson, II, 265). So Winstanley, pp. 185-8.

<sup>3</sup> "The American Scholar."

<sup>4</sup> Autobiographical Memoranda, Grosart, III, 222.

<sup>5</sup> Herbert Read, *Wordsworth*, New York, 1931, pp. 59-60.

<sup>6</sup> "C" in A. O. Lovejoy's "'Nature' as Aesthetic Norm," *Modern Language Notes*, XLII (November, 1927), 446

<sup>7</sup> *Literary and Lake Reminiscences*, III, *Collected Writings*, ed. Masson, II, 263

<sup>8</sup> *Correspondence of Henry Taylor*, 1888, p. 110.

<sup>9</sup> Bradley, *Oxford Lectures*, 1909, p. 119.

<sup>10</sup> Knight, II, 351; *Oxf. W.*, pp. 113, 297, 926, 927.

<sup>11</sup> *Athenaeum*, April 22, 1905; *Modern Language Notes*, XXII (1907), 83-9, 110-17 (reprinted in Mr. Cooper's *Methods and Aims in the Study of Literature*, New York, 1915, pp. 96-132). Mr. Cooper insists on the criticism involved in Wordsworth's use of books of travel and the want of criticism by Coleridge in his use of them.

<sup>12</sup> D. A. Winstanley, *Unreformed Cambridge*, Cambridge, 1935, p. 258.

<sup>13</sup> "Wordsworth's 'Prelude,'" *Fallodon Papers*, Boston, 1926, p. 156.



## BOOK IV

A SHORTER time is traversed in iv than in any other book of *The Prelude*, since it deals only with the three months of the poet's first long vacation from the university, July to October, 1788, when he was eighteen years old. (This vacation was marked by three memorable experiences—the first walk round the lake, the dedication, the encounter with the soldier—the first two of which approach the mystic. It was also distinguished by the development of a greater interest in man and by a tenderness, a human-heartedness, which extended to the mountains, the brooks, and even to the stars but which appeared to be directed chiefly to girls of his own age.)

Book iv seems to have been composed in February or March, 1804. The meeting with the discharged soldier was apparently versified by the spring of 1798 (de S., xxi, xxxiii); and as rough drafts of other parts (expressing disappointment with this vacation and describing the dedication) are found in MS W immediately preceding passages later incorporated in Book v, if the composition of v preceded that of iii (see pp. 339-40 above), these parts at least would seem to have been composed in January, 1804. But it is difficult to reconstruct MS W or to be certain of its implications.

To the list of MSS for Book iv should be added: "*for ll.* [A] 450-70 Alfoxden Note Book."

1-26. An admirable opening, similar to the beginning of iii. The first four lines, although an improvement on A, are inferior to the rest—here as often the early texts give place names which were later omitted (see viii. A 228-43 n.); 6, 24-6, and most of 13-15 and 18 are not in A but, except for those in 6, the added details are of doubtful value. As Wordsworth had no home and as three of his brothers were at Hawkshead it was natural that he should return thither, especially as his mother's father and brother, the Cooksons, with whom Dorothy was living at Penrith, seem not to have made any of the children happy.

19-23. Cf. v. 391-406. The church now shows the slate color of the stone, which in Wordsworth's day was covered with roughcast and whitewash. See ii. A 38-40 n.

27-40. Cf. 64-5 and 216-30, which reveals the same kindly but keen discrimination as the present passage. The Fenwick notes tell us that the account of Peter Bell's wife, who became the mother of Benoni, and the stories of the Jacobite and the Whig in *The Excursion* (vi. 392-521), "I had from the dear old dame with whom, as a schoolboy, and afterwards, I lodged." Another of her stories is given in viii. A 219-310. See also "Nutting," 8-11.

41-92. "Throng" (A 30) was changed to "crowd" presumably because of the following "th"; A 38 is simpler and less literary than 49 but may give the impression not that the table was the center of activities, the place of resort, but that it was used as a seat; "but . . . reproach" (63-4) is an effective addition to a well-phrased line and a half; 73-6, especially "Like recognitions" (not in A) and "habiliments," illustrate the heavy, Latinic diction and the involved, awkward style into which Wordsworth frequently and unaccountably drops; "Not less" (77) is a marked improvement over A 68, as is, even apart from avoiding a second repetition of "bed," "Roar . . . hard" (86); and "favourites" (93) is likewise better than "faces" (A 84). With 85-6, cf. vii. A 486-7.

✓ 81-92. This passage is characteristic of Wordsworth not only in its beauty but in its being based on the recollections of a simple experience of childhood. The related fragment (de S., 521-2) illustrates the activity of Wordsworth's imagination while he was still a boy, and his fondness for romance (see vii. 77-84 n.).

93-135. A pleasant digression (see ii. 203-75 n.; xiii. 79-220 n.) but confusing in that the reader may fail to notice (what 131-2 and 136-7 make clear) that it is intended merely to introduce the incident which follows and that the walks it describes took place, not in the summer vacation of 1788, but in the later school-days at Hawkshead when the adolescent boy turned from sports to poetry, to solitude, and to nature for her own sake (see ii. 276-81 n.).

113. See vi. 158-60 n. Note the imagery in 114 and 137.

113-17. One of Wordsworth's earliest pieces, "The Dog—an Idyllium" (*P. W., Youth*, p. 264), has the lines:

If, while I gaz'd to Nature blind,  
In the calm Ocean of my mind  
Some new-created image rose  
In full-grown beauty at its birth  
Lovely as Venus from the sea,  
Then, while my glad hand sprung to thee,  
We were the happiest pair on earth.

118-30. See i. 50-5 n.

125-30. Cf. iii. 147-9.

136. *freshness*: Not in A 126-7. Cf. 191; iii. 97, 365.

137-90. See pp. 157, 162-5 above. In subject matter, spirit, and expression this paragraph recalls the great passages in Book I, to which it is hardly inferior. It may have been written about the same time as these although there are no early manuscripts. The final text is almost the same as A. Wordsworth remembered this scene not only for its ministry to his spirit but because of the "consummate happiness" he derived from it (138-40). Of this ministry and of this joy his companions knew nothing, and his consciousness of this fact was in part responsible for his dwelling on "the hiding-places of man's power" (xii. 279). On 150-71 see Chapter VIII.

✓ 145. *untuned*: Not in tune with the boy's happy spirit and, in appearance, not with the "gracious spirit [that] o'er this earth presides." Another of the notable experiences that came to Wordsworth in bad weather; see i. 416-18 n., pp. 46, 100-1.

153-8. Subtle insight admirably expressed.

160-2. Smoother and clearer than A 150-2, which, however, is of considerable interest.

✓ 164-76. "Glimmering" should not be overlooked, for the reader is likely to interpret the passage as referring to more definite ideas than were probably in the boy's mind. Presumably here as on earlier occasions (ii. 315-19) it was "an obscure sense Of possible sublimity," *how* rather than *what* he felt that he remembered.

✓ 166. For Wordsworth's instinctive belief in immortality see "We are Seven," and the Fenwick note to the Immortality Ode.

167. "Informs" (forms inwardly) and "creates" (see ii. 245-61 n.) are intransitive verbs; 166-8 refers to the tremendous active, creative powers of the human spirit. The "sleep" referred to is not death but the deadening influence of custom and of the cares of life; see xiv. 157-62 n.

170-1. *spreads abroad His being*: This striking expression, which suggests something like the permeation of the physical world by the Deity, may refer to influence on others or moral power gained by the man himself.

172. Presumably there should be a comma after "love" as there is in A 162. Wordsworth may have felt the attractions of the opposite sex strongly for the first time during this summer (see ii. 276-81 n.).

174-5. Cf. *Excursion*, iv. 1146-7: "central peace, subsisting at the heart Of endless agitation."

181. Alliteration.

184-7. Cf. i. 322-3 and i. 82-5 n.

191. *freshness*: Cf. 136. The word is apt although it does not tell the entire story (see 231-55 n.). On his return from the university, where he had matured and had seen another kind of person and of life, he became conscious of many things which he had previously accepted as a matter of course (note "surprise," 194). His new objectivity also made him observe the country folk more carefully and "with clearer knowledge" (214). The development of his admiration for humble man is the theme of VIII, which tells us (340-56) that until he was twenty-two or twenty-three nature was his chief interest.

194. *The peaceful scene*: Of the lives of his former neighbors; "The prospect" (A 184) means the same.

195-203. A 185 was wisely dropped; 199 is an improvement over A 190; but 201-3 is less simple and effective than A 192-4.

209-30. Humor; see i. 509-35 n.

209. *a subtler sense*: Better than "another eye" (A 200), which occurs again in A 205 (214).

212. *without design*: Without any ulterior motive such as ridicule. Note "in a sense Of love and knowledge" (A 204-5)—the meaning is completely changed in the final text (213-14). Taken together with A 204-5, 212 probably means "in a kindly spirit."

223. Cf. v. 279-83.

231-55. An extension to trees, mountains, and stars of the feeling described in the two preceding paragraphs, especially in the first. (It is clear from these that Wordsworth found not only "freshness" and increased interest in "the daily life of those Whose occupations really [he] loved" (192-3) but that his "human-heartedness" (233) was increasing. Evidences of such a change appear throughout the entire book: from the meetings with the ferryman, the "old Dame, so kind and motherly," and former neighbors, with which it begins, to the encounter with the discharged soldier, which concludes it.) One aspect of this development, the "slight shocks of young love-liking" which "tingled through the veins" (possibly stimulated by the "very frantic and dissolute" manners of the Cambridge students), may have proceeded rapidly at this time and is perhaps responsible for the severity with which he later judged the summer.)

(At any rate a "human-heartedness" (233), "a pensive feeling" (241), a "tender" mood (251) appeared at this time in his feeling about natural objects even the stars. Hitherto he had not connected these with any human being but himself; yet now he heard in them the still, *glad* music of humanity; they seemed to be related to mankind, to offer comfort and inspiration in dealing with human problems. "Now seen in their old haunts" (243) accounts in part for the change; he associated them with the shepherds. This feeling may have been an outgrowth of the "sentiment of Being spread O'er all" (ii. 386-418; iii. 127-35) of which he was conscious throughout the preceding year, the period which seems to be described in 253-5; note the emphasis on joy in A 246 and ii. A 429-30.) The line that follows 248 in A<sup>2</sup> B<sup>2</sup> and C, "Drawn from the pure imaginative soul," is of some interest. Despite 249, a late addition, "mortality" (248) may mean not so much "death" as "mutability" or "humanity" (relations to mankind), although the shortness of human life as compared with that of the stars is implied.)

231-5. One of the "many examples in the *Prelude*" of "mere flatness" (Raleigh, *Wordsworth*, 1903, p. 103).

A 224-6. A 224, an attractive line, was discarded presum-

ably because "another sense" is implied in "a subtler sense" (209, cf. A 200, 205) and because it did not seem quite true inasmuch as he had doubtless felt something of this in previous years. "Gladsome air" was fortunately replaced by "absolute wealth" (234).

240. Perhaps this means a realization of the mutability of all things; since this change might be either improvement or deterioration it was a matter of "congratulation or regret." Presumably there should be a comma after "thoughts," as in A 231. Wordsworth seems to say that he had three kinds of thoughts: (1) of change, (2) of congratulation, (3) of regret; but this does not make sense. "Of change," which is in A 232, cannot mean "new thoughts" or "thoughts which constituted a change" since that is said in A 233.

243-7. An attractive passage. Cf. A 382-4 and the Concordance for Wordsworth's other references to stars. "Those fair Seven," the Great Dipper (the Plough). In *Excursion*, vi. 763, Jupiter is spoken of as "that glorious star." See also Dorothy's Journal of January 29, 1802, "William says we always call the largest star Jupiter."

248-55. Three periods are distinguished: the first marked by awe (cf. xiv. 243-6), the second by delight, the third by tenderness and social consciousness. "Beauty" (A 245) is omitted from 254 presumably because it was present in the first period; "joy" (A 246), already expressed in "delight," is changed to "hope" in 255.

✓256-70. And admirable figure to express what is more boldly said in iii. 612-16. Lines 265-6 are clearer and more attractive than A 256-7.

273-7. In the 1850 text it is the incidents about to be told that are particularly fair and clear; in A, the matters just narrated. By "shapes" (274) presumably the two concluding episodes are meant. In A 265-70 the transition is well managed. Except for "passing," A 267 is unpleasantly monosyllabic but 275-6 are hardly an improvement. Despite "not withheld," 277 is better than A 269.

✓ (278-306, 339-45. The severity with which this summer is judged is in marked contrast with the relative satisfaction with which most persons would view it, with the leniency with

which Wordsworth usually surveys his past, and with his approval of the two following vacations, described in vi. Of course there may have been sound, unmentioned reasons for his severity but he appears to be finding fault with harmless gaieties for not being "feeding pleasures" (288). Such, indeed, they were not in the sense that they directly fed his spiritual growth, his poetry, and the major interests of his mature years; but it is hard to see that they ministered less than the sports with their "revelry . . . and the loud uproar" which centered around the rock in the village square. They may have been of much more value, in keeping him happy and normal during the difficult transition from youth to manhood (see ii. 276-81 n.) and in giving him an understanding of the pleasures and interests of the average man (see 191-255, 300-1) and some little tolerance for them—he never acquired much. Wordsworth was critical of these "gawds" because he did not understand what was going on within him, why he turned to them; like his college diversions they seemed trivial and he found it hard to be patient with triviality (see iii. 448 n.; vii. 726; viii. 545; xii. 213; *Excursion*, iv. 819-25; "To Lady Fleming," 51-4).

A 270, W variant. *this outset*: The beginning of the summer vacation. Note the formal, literary quality of both the style and diction of this relatively early manuscript. Another, somewhat similar passage in W is given at the beginning of the de S. note to A 345.

282-3. Cf. "L'Allegro," 127-8:

And pomp, and feast, and revelry,  
With masque, and antique pageantry.

290-7. Fourteen lines in A have been condensed to seven and a half and improved thereby. "To Nature and to Books" (A 282), since it occurs in 299 (A 306), was wisely dropped. Should "shipp'd" (A 283) be "slipp'd"? A 289 is unpleasantly monosyllabic.

A 295-304. Omitted later probably because Wordsworth thought he had already said enough on the subject.

A 296. *reason*: Wordsworth distinguished at least three kinds of reason: (1) "the grand And simple Reason" (xii.

A 123-4) or "Reason in her most exalted mood" (xiv. 192), that is, intuition, the *Vernunft*; (2) "that humbler power Which . . . work[s] By logic and minute analysis" (xii. A 124-6) and which, when misapplied, carried too far, and unchecked by other faculties, becomes Godwinian rationalism; (3) "right reason" (xiii. 22), that is judgment, sanity, instinctive wisdom, common sense, "the plain And universal reason of mankind" (vi. 545-6). With this last sometimes goes the idea of a restraining force which controls the passions; see "Happy Warrior," 12-18, 27-34. It is of this third "reason" that he is speaking in the present passage, in which he equates it with "that religious dignity of mind, That is the very faculty of truth." So, too, when he writes of rapture "chasten'd, stemm'd And balanced by a Reason which indeed Is reason" (xiv. A 263-5); of The Happy Warrior as one "whose law is reason"; and when he declares that primitive man, "Nature's child . . . Confessed no law but what his reason taught" (*Descriptive Sketches*, 434-7).

Further illustrations are:

the adamantine holds of truth  
By reason built, or passion, which itself  
Is highest reason in a soul sublime. (v. 39-41)

(In the second line "reason" may be used in all three senses or only in the first; in the third line it is used in the first sense.)

their reason [sense (2)] seemed  
Confusion-stricken by a higher power  
Than human understanding. (ix. 258-60)

Other instances of (2) will be found in ii. 231; v. 104-5; ix. 258-60; xi. 88, 113; xii. 67; "To my Sister," 26; "Desire we past illusions," 7; *Excursion*, ii. 240;—of (3) will be found in iii. 83-5; v. 152, vi. 114, 459; x. 206, 427; xi. 27-31; xiv. 446; "When Philocetes," 10; "Laodamia," 140; "Ode to Duty," 55; "Once I could hail," 38; *Excursion*, iv. 269; v. 257, 501-4. Often it is hard to say whether Wordsworth is thinking of (2) or (3) or whether he has both in mind—as when he speaks of reason as contrasted with faith or as the characteristic which distinguishes man from other forms of life. Illustrations may



be found in viii. 493-4; x. 135-7; xi. 308; xii. 47, 70; "Oh what a Wreck," 8. In both (2) and (3), which correspond to *der Verstand*, reason is opposed both to "nature" in the sense of "the pure and simple work of the senses" (Gariod, p. 99) and to that higher intuition, *die Vernunft*.<sup>1</sup>

A 296-7. *press'd too closely On*: Left little room for.

A 297-8. Wordsworth held real dignity of mind in high esteem because he thought of it as closely akin to simplicity, integrity, and independence of character, and therefore as essential to "right reason" (see A 296 n.). In terming it "the very faculty of truth" he is, however, confusing an essential condition of right reason with reason itself (see pp. 234, 237 above). Compare his emphasis on the grandeur of external nature and of the human spirit (xiv. 169 n.) and see ix. 347-8 n.; xiii. 80-1 n.; *Excursion*, II. 286-9

(He neither felt encouragement nor hope:  
For moral dignity, and strength of mind,  
Were wanting; and simplicity of life;  
And reverence for himself);

iv. 352 ("The dignity of life is not impaired"), 763-5

(We live by Admiration, Hope, and Love;  
And, even as these are well and wisely fixed,  
In dignity of being we ascend);

Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (*Oxf. W.*, p. 935: "The human mind is capable of being excited without . . . violent stimulants; and he must have a very faint perception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this"). The Revolution had taught Wordsworth that without these virtues man, depending on analytical reason, is no better than a tiger.)

A 302, A<sup>2</sup>C D variant. Is the reference to some sort of cage or to a mechanism peculiar to eastern palaces? The lines would apparently make better sense if they came after A 303 and referred to "frame."

301-3. Cf. iii. 562-70.

304-6. These lines lack the toleration and good sense which mark v. 406-25 and recommend a manner of life that might have made the boy queer, ill at ease with others, or even a prig. With the sports, especially the out-door sports, of boys Words-

worth felt hearty sympathy but of the more sophisticated indoor amusements of college youth he was intolerant.

307-38 See pp. 157, 163-5 above. *Excursion*, i. 197-218 is probably based upon the same experience. Professor de Selincourt believes (p. xxvi) that (1) the "culminating episode" of *The Prelude* as originally planned in five books was to be (2) "the consecration of his life to poetry upon the heights above Hawkshead (iv. 320-45)" and that (3) "this was, perhaps, the great moment of his life." These three assertions, which seem to have been generally accepted, may all be true but they appear to rest on very little evidence.<sup>2</sup> The first is presumably deduced from the fact that, aside from the encounter with the discharged soldier (which is not in MS W),<sup>3</sup> this is apparently the latest of the consecutively-narrated incidents which were to be included in the original *Prelude*.<sup>4</sup> Yet for a "culminating episode" it comes in a strange and inconspicuous place, for in MS W it is followed by a number of closely related but negligible lines (de S., 524), then by the present v, then by the present xiv! Would not its effect, as a culmination, escape the reader and be destroyed by later episodes and by many hundred lines of less exalted verse? This is the more likely inasmuch as nothing is said to point it out as a culminating episode,—nothing comparable to iii. 170 ff.:

And here, O Friend! have I retraced my life  
Up to an eminence, and told a tale  
Of matters which not falsely may be called  
The glory of my youth.

(The nature of this summer morning experience has already been considered in the light of similar experiences. It is well to recall that the writing of poetry is neither mentioned nor implied in the entire passage or in the lines that precede and follow it. Before and after Wordsworth laments the triviality of the period. "And yet," he adds, as a preface to the episode,

And yet, for chastisement of these regrets,  
The memory of one particular hour  
Doth here rise up against me.

(307-9)

That is, there was one transcendent hour which was anything but trivial. Therein and not in relation to his life work lay its

significance.<sup>b</sup> To be sure, he had written verse before and doubtless expected to write it at intervals in the future. Indeed, according to the Fenwick note to *An Evening Walk*, he composed part of that work during this very summer; yet, if iv is to be trusted, his mind was little occupied with such things or with what he was to do in the future. Furthermore, if this experience was a momentous one for his poetry it is strange that he never refers to it in any of the passages in which he speaks of his art, of decision to be a poet, or of the kind of verse he wishes to compose. On the contrary, in writing of his later college life he explicitly asserts:

Those were the days  
Which also first emboldened me to trust  
With firmness, hitherto but lightly touched  
By such a daring thought, that I might leave  
Some monument behind me which pure hearts  
Should reverence. (vi. 52-7)

Similarly, if this was the great moment of his life it is strange that he does not speak of it as such, that he makes no mention of it in the earliest manuscripts of *The Prelude*, that he never refers to it again in his verse, his letters, or other prose,<sup>c</sup> and that he does not include it among those "spots of time" to which he "oft repaired, and thence would drink, As at a fountain" (xii. 325-6). We are not left in doubt as to other crises or important stages in the poet's development;<sup>d</sup> then why here at this most important of all? The truth is that there were many great moments in Wordsworth's early life, that the relative importance of these cannot be gauged by the nobility of the verse which commemorates them, and that a dedication as to ends need not involve any consciousness as to means.)

309-12. Cf. 374-8.

312-16. There are eight "and's" in these five lines. "And mirth" (312) adds nothing to "gaiety"; see ix. 112 n.

316-19. Cf. vi. 13-16, *Descriptive Sketches* (1793), 114-15, 156-7, and especially 150-5:

Those steadfast eyes, that beating breasts inspire  
To throw the "sultry ray" of young Desire;  
Those lips, whose tides of fragrance come, and go,

Accordant to the cheek's unquiet glow;  
 Those shadowy breasts in love's soft light array'd,  
 And rising, by the moon of passion sway'd.

De Quincey, who knew Wordsworth well, said of him:

The nose, a little arched, is large; which, by the way . . . has always been accounted an unequivocal expression of animal appetites organically strong. And that expressed the simple truth: Wordsworth's intellectual passions were fervent and strong; but they rested upon a basis of preternatural animal sensibility diffused through *all* the animal passions (or appetites).<sup>8</sup>

Miss Fenwick exclaimed: "how fearfully strong are all his feelings and affections! If his intellect had been less powerful they must have destroyed him long ago."<sup>9</sup> In a letter to Jane Pollard of February, 16, 1793, Dorothy mentioned William's "violence of Affection . . . which demonstrates itself every moment of the Day when the Objects of his affection are present." See also viii. A 841-2 n. In the present passage 318 is somewhat toned down from A 326.

319-38. The 1850 text of this passage is a notable instance of great improvement over A secured through slight changes such as substituting "rose" and "lay" for "was," "shone" for "were as" (see de S., xlv), "near" for "all" (A 333 repeated in A 337), and "which yet survives" for "which even yet remains," transferring "glorious" to a more emphatic position, and adding "in front" and "near" to give greater definiteness to the picture. William Empson, on the other hand, prefers the earlier reading because it emphasizes the poet's feelings (which are the important thing) whereas "in the new lines Wordsworth is painting a picture."<sup>10</sup> I do not see that the feelings are sacrificed in the later version and I believe Wordsworth felt it important that the setting of the notable incident which follows should be as vivid as possible. The transformation of A 328-9 into 320-2 involves more alteration: the prosaic "Two miles I had to walk along the fields" is dropped and instead of being told "the sky was bright with day" we see the dawn "kindling . . . copse And open field."

344-9. "Powers" is much better than "that" (A 351) and 347 is an improvement on A 354, but 349 is less simple than

A 356 and the artificial, alliterative 348 is amazingly bad. "Primitive hours" (A 355), fresh, unsophisticated periods such as he had enjoyed in boyhood.

349-53. "I found myself as much in harmony as ever with the end and spirit of God's works as vision reveals them, now in Nature, now in Man, and now in the two conjoined." "Written spirit of God's works": the spirit of God written in his works. Line 353 is not in A.

354-469. Inasmuch as a passage corresponding to A 450-71 is found in the Alfoxden Note Book, there is good reason to suppose that this entire episode was completed in something like its present form by the end of February, 1798. It may then have been intended as a separate poem such as "The Old Cumberland Beggar," "Animal Tranquillity and Decay," and some of the Lyrical Ballads. It resembles these pieces, *The Ruined Cottage*, and *Guilt and Sorrow* not only in style and phrasing but in its sympathetic picture of the sorrows and wrongs of the poor and in connecting these sufferings with war. It illustrates Wordsworth's principle, "that the Imagination not only does not require for its exercise the intervention of supernatural agency, but . . . may be called forth as imperiously, and for kindred results of pleasure, by incidents . . . in the humblest departments of daily life," and the difference he pointed out between his work and "the popular Poetry of the day," namely, "the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling."<sup>11</sup> It belongs, therefore, with those "spots of time" which nourished his spirit because they recorded "visitings of imaginative power" and showed "the mind is lord and master—outward sense The obedient servant of her will" (xii. 203, 222-3). His comment on "Resolution and Independence" (which narrates an incident much like the present one) is also relevant here:

A person reading the poem with feelings like mine will have been awed and controlled, expecting something spiritual or supernatural. What is brought forward? A lonely place, "a pond, by which an old man *was*, far from all house or home:" not *stood*, nor *sat*, but *was*—the figure presented in the most naked simplicity possible. . . . I cannot conceive a figure more impressive than that of an old man like

this, the survivor of a wife and ten children, travelling alone among the mountains and all lonely places, carrying with him his own fortitude and the necessities which an unjust state of society has laid upon him.<sup>12</sup>

How much of the introductory passage in A (363-99) was added in 1804 when the story was incorporated into IV and how much of it was written earlier we have no means of knowing, but it is clear that on revising the poem in 1832 or 1839 Wordsworth felt he should explain the significance of the incident<sup>13</sup> and so added 354-70. But as this new introduction together with the forty prefatory lines already written would have been too much, all but ten lines of A 360-99 were dropped. Unfortunately the explanation is unconvincing. As in the account of finding the body of the drowned man (v. 426-59), the alleged cause appears quite inadequate to account for the impressiveness of the result.

Wordsworth, it appears, like little Edward ("Basil") Montagu, when pressed for a reason invents one.<sup>14</sup> Doubtless the soldier was, among other things, the embodiment of solitude; but it was not to illustrate this fact that a hundred and sixteen lines were devoted to an incident apparently so trivial. Furthermore, the encounter had in it too much of the ministry of fear<sup>15</sup> to illustrate "how gracious, how benign, is Solitude"; and its impressiveness is primarily due not to solitude but to mystery and surprise,—the mystery of night and of the unknown man unexpectedly encountered, a mystery that is intensified by the "ghostly figure" of the man, his sufferings, his dignity, and his reticence. It would seem as if this were one of the times when "the hiding-places of man's power [had] Open[ed]" but that, before the explanation was written, age had come on and the poet scarcely saw at all (xii. 279-82). In order to understand the profound impression the encounter made on the young man we must recall that it came at the end of a summer given over to what in his better moments seemed to him trivialities, that body and mind were relaxed, quiescent, peculiarly susceptible to strong impressions, that he was alone in a lonesome place amid profound solitude. Suddenly he came upon a spectacle which, though simple enough, would at such a time, make almost anyone's heart beat faster. But although fear passed quickly, it had prepared the way for and

left behind something deeper that was intensified by the dignity, taciturnity, and uncomplaining endurance of the soldier. Like the meeting with the leech gatherer, like the experience at the gibbet (xii. 208-86) and the first entrance into London (viii. 539-59), this encounter fed the spirit of the youth in a way that he could not explain. It roused him from the "heartless chase Of trivial pleasures" and gave him a renewed sense of the mystery of life, of the native dignity of man, of "genuine prowess," the "awful . . . might of souls" (iii. 180-5); it spoke to him as the mountains and the sunrise spoke,

Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope,  
And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith . . .  
Of moral strength, and intellectual Power . . .  
Of the individual Mind that keeps her own  
Inviolatè retirement. (*Recluse*, "Prospectus," 14-20)

The changes introduced in revision, though numerous, are, except in the introduction, of no particular interest. The final account is thirty lines the shorter, most of the omissions being made from the body of the narrative: A 412-13, A 419-21, A 426-32, A 450-9, A 464-5, A 475-6. Although generally pleasant, these passages are unnecessary and A 456-7 is banal. Yet "A desolation, a simplicity That seem'd akin to solitude" (A 418-19) is much better than 402-4; A 470-1 is preferable to the diffuse 436-9; and A 498-9 is simpler than 463-4. In 445-7, however, the final text is briefer and more effective than the early. The introduction presents more of a problem since there are excellent things in each version. Lines 354-70, despite the justice of most of Professor de Selincourt's censures (pp. xlviii-ix, 525), constitute, as do 384-7, one of the better pieces of Wordsworth's later verse (1832-9); 371-9 were presumably added because A 369-70 seemed abrupt and, with A 375-99 eliminated, some account of the boy's physical and mental state was needed (observe that here the final text gives, as it rarely does, more personal and local details than does A); 374-5 are bad; 384-7, which correspond roughly to A 389-91, are excellent and, with the sudden contrast to the "uncouth shape," well placed. A 375-99 is one of the more valuable additions Professor de Selincourt has made to the Wordsworth canon and,

like the incident that follows, has a quiet power peculiar to its author. The physical responsiveness to nature is notable. A 363-6 may have been dropped for the sake of condensation and of avoiding the merely personal—in the final version of the similar xiii. A 145-52 the individual taste has been generalized. But there is a simpler explanation: A 363-8 was written as an introduction to the incident that follows and, when the new introduction (354-70) was composed, was no longer necessary. This plausible suggestion calls attention, however, to a new difficulty: that A 352-9, A 360-2, and A 363-8 really constitute three prefaces to the same narrative and that the last two seriously interfere with the first. For 346-52 is much like 297-309; the sense is, "trivial as the summer was it had its divine moments,—once. . . ." Now in MS W, A 353-65, the introduction to the discharged soldier incident, immediately precede A 305-45, the "dedication." It may be therefore that, like 297-309, 346-53 (A 353-9) was composed as a transition to the "dedication" and that A 360-2 and A 363-5 were disconnected jottings—MS W has several such and it should be observed that iv does not describe "wanderings" (A 360) and that in W A 363-5 is broken off abruptly. Possibly they were intended as variants, the first of the beginning of xiv or of vi. 190-236, and the second of xiii. 142-51 (A 145-51); or the second may have been a tentative introduction to the soldier episode. Later, when he came to compose iv, Wordsworth found A 353-65 without any connection with its surroundings and, forgetting his original purpose, made of the three fragments a single preface to his encounter with the soldier. In his revision of 1832 or 1839 he substituted 354-70 for A 360-5 and either did not notice or hoped his readers would not that 346-53 were left like a flight of steps leading to a blank wall.

(The profusion and accuracy of the details with which the story is told testify to the depth of the impression the encounter made. Some features may have been invented but Wordsworth had a remarkable memory for such matters and he versified this incident only ten years after it occurred.)

358. *image*: Cf. A 392-3; for Wordsworth's emphasis on imagery, see vi. 158-60 n.



359-65. Cf. viii. 260-1.

367-70. Because of the contrast between its present quiet and the hurry and noise usually associated with it. Wall Street, New York City, on a Sunday makes the same impression. Stillness and quiet are again emphasized in 384-7. See pp. 55, 65 above.

A 364-5. *alone Along*: an unpleasant jingle.

A 386-8. Wordsworth tells us not what really happened—the influence on his mind of the sensory stimuli of coolness and moisture and of the absence of those which indicate light and sound—but what seemed to him to be happening: he felt as if his body were drinking in restoration as a porous object drinks in the liquid which surrounds it. Cf. 155-8, A 397 and “To my Sister,” 27-8, “Our minds shall drink at every pore The spirit of the season.”

A 390-1. Cf. Wordsworth’s sonnet, “Most sweet it is with unuplifted eyes,” and pp. 96-100 above.

A 392-5. Cf. 358, and lines 10-11 of the fragment printed on p. 512 of de S., and vi. 158-60 n.

A 397. *animal*: Physical, non-intellectual; cf. i. 563-4.

A 450-9. By dropping these lines and A 464-5 Wordsworth eliminated from the final text nearly everything that has survived of his first account of the incident. “The Village” (A 450) was Far Sawrey, which lay behind. “A Labourer” (A 456): the Alfoxden Note Book adds “an honest man and kind”; clearly an acquaintance.

467-9. A simple, effective close, in harmony with the restrained, direct narrative which it concludes. The lines added in D and E were wisely omitted.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Charles Williams (*Reason and Beauty in the Poetic Mind*, Oxford, 1933, pp. 28-9) asserts, "By Reason it [*The Prelude*] means either (i) an abstract pattern . . . the self-consistent, unemotional world of logical creation, or (ii) that world exalted in passion to sublimity." He adds, "Reason without passion and yet applied to the world is a deadly thing. . . . But when it is passion it sees into the life of things." Mr. Williams omits (3), seems to equate (ii) with the imagination, and to ignore the deep gulf between the *Vernunft* and the *Verstand*.

<sup>2</sup> There is evidence to support Professor de Selincourt's contention that the "shorter *Prelude* would have taken his history no further than his first Long Vacation." Yet it seems a strange place to stop. One would expect that if any of the vacations were to be included it would be the last, devoted to the memorable tramp across France and Switzerland, not the unsatisfactory first. But in view of our uncertainty as to whether "Books" was to have preceded or followed III and as to the date and nature of MS W, which is made up in part of disconnected or unfinished fragments and which runs together what came to be IV and V,—in view of our uncertainty as to these matters we are bound to be in no little doubt as to the original plans for the last three of the five books.

<sup>3</sup> Yet it was composed before MS W was written and W has, apparently as an isolated fragment, IV. A 353-65, which breaks off abruptly at the beginning of the description in A of that encounter and which accordingly suggests that when MS W was written the discharged soldier was to have been included, possibly before the "dedication," which in W follows A 365.

<sup>4</sup> The ascent of Snowdon (summer of 1791), with an account of which the original Book V (de S., xxxvii) began, was made later but it is introduced not chronologically as biography, but as an illustration of the workings of the imagination.

<sup>5</sup> If he had been asked what vows were made for him and to what he was dedicated on that memorable morning walk he would probably have found considerable difficulty in forming a reply. He felt that he was "called," set apart, appointed to some important service. If he had been pressed as to what service, he might have said service to man and to the Deity, though it is doubtful if at the time his feelings were even so definite as this. (Compare Shelley's vagueness in the "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" concerning a similar experience of his youth, "I vowed that I would dedicate my powers To thee and thine") We should be chary of doing for other poets what Bishop Warburton did for Pope—giving their ideas a clarity, a consistency, and order which they did not possess in the minds that conceived them.

<sup>6</sup> To be sure, *Excursion*, i. 197-218 seems to be based on this experience but it is there assigned to the Wanderer not to Wordsworth and is spoken of not as unique but as typical of the youth's communion with nature.

<sup>7</sup> For example, ii. 272-352, 386-418 (referred to again in iii. 127-35 and viii. 476-85); iii. 170-203; viii. 340-64, 625-45; x. 263-76 (referred to again in xi. 173-88); xi. 7-21, 194-356; xii. 75-92; xiii. 279-312, 350-78. It should be observed that Wordsworth stresses several other occasions as if they were as important as this one, e. g. i. 340-400; iv. 137-90; vi. 557-640 ("The day

was an epoch in his life," Harper, I, 102; I do not agree); viii 539-59; x. 511-603; xii. 208-335, xiii 312-78, xiv. 1-129

<sup>8</sup> *Literary and Lake Reminiscences*, iii, *Collected Writings*, ed. Masson, II, 246. The three dots are in the original

<sup>9</sup> *Correspondence of Henry Taylor*, 1888, pp. 109-10

<sup>10</sup> "Basic English and Wordsworth," *The Kenyon Review*, II (1940), 449-57.

<sup>11</sup> Dedication of *Peter Bell* and Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (*Oxf. W.*, pp. 236, 935).

<sup>12</sup> "Observations to some friends," *Memoirs*, I, 173. See also Walter Raleigh's *Wordsworth*, p. 181.

<sup>13</sup> The three lines at the end of IV in D and E (de S., 133) indicate that he had previously felt the need of some such explanation.

<sup>14</sup> See "Anecdote for Fathers" and the Fenwick note to it.

<sup>15</sup> Note 387-412, especially 410 (A 434) and A 420-1, and see Chapter III.

## BOOK V

Comme tout ce qui entre dans l'entendement humain y vient par les sens, la première raison de l'homme est une raison sensitive; c'est elle qui sert de base à la raison intellectuelle: nos premiers maîtres de philosophie sont nos pieds, nos mains, nos yeux. Substituer des livres à tout cela, ce n'est pas nous apprendre à raisonner, c'est nous apprendre à nous servir de la raison d'autrui; c'est nous apprendre à beaucoup croire, et à ne jamais rien savoir.

Rousseau, *Émile*, livre II

"BOOKS" is the announced subject of v; yet little is said in it of the literature of knowledge as distinguished from the literature of power or, indeed, of the part played by serious reading of any kind in the development of men. On the contrary, a third of the 605 lines treat of education and are in the main an attack on book learning. Except for an impressive general commendation of literature, only children's books are mentioned; the survey of the poet's own reading is carried hardly beyond his thirteenth year and is far from complete up to that point, since all the works singled out for especial mention in Wordsworth's prose account of his early reading are omitted.<sup>1</sup> Nor is the point made clear which is insisted on in the Fenwick note to "The Norman Boy," that children are interested in other things than the doings of children and "will derive most benefit from books which are not unworthy the perusal of persons of any age."

Book v begins, somewhat as XIII does, with a bit of philosophical meditation, although here the personal note is also heard. (The first forty-nine lines deal with the perishability of books; these are followed by the dream of the Arab with the stone and shell, which serves as a second and longer introduction (115 lines) to the theme of v. Yet the subject heralded with so much pomp soon gives place to a discussion of the education of children, which extends to 203 lines (223-425) and which is connected with "Books" only as it offers com-

ments on children's reading and as books are a principal means of education. It would seem as if Wordsworth was reluctant to come to grips with the subject, a great part of which he postponed when he reached the end of v (see A 630-7) and to which, although he returned to it fitfully, the poem confessedly gives no adequate consideration.<sup>2</sup> For it should be observed that in so far as v sticks to its theme it deals almost exclusively with children's books, whereas the lofty and extended introduction says nothing of these but treats of "immortal verse, Shakespeare, or Milton, labourers divine" (164-5) and of

all the adamantine holds of truth  
By reason built, or passion . . .  
The consecrated works of Bard and Sage. (39-42)

A strange preamble, this, to *Jack the Giant-killer*! A domed and spacious vestibule which leads only to the nursery!<sup>3</sup> Lines 207-18 seem to have suggested to him that he might well make some comment on books less lofty than those of which he had been speaking; this comment may have led him to consider the advantages of giving a child freedom in reading and in other matters; and this in turn naturally drew him on to the subject of children's books and to education in general (a subject in which he was much interested), until he had either forgotten the splendor of his far beginning or at least had decided that v was long enough and the "adamantine holds of truth" should be treated in a later book.<sup>4</sup> As a result, v is not unified or homogeneous and an important element in the discipline of a poet's mind is slighted.

Wordsworth's ideas on elementary education are eminently characteristic of the man: strongly felt, unconventional, one-sided, sane, anti-intellectual, at once liberal and conservative,<sup>5</sup> and marked by emphasis on freedom, simplicity, and close contact with nature. Their most striking characteristic is that (except in 408-10) they ignore schools and the books studied in them, and are concerned solely with what is commonly termed "play." This unusual emphasis arises from what is the chief virtue of Wordsworth's point of view: the clearness with which he sees that whatever contributes to the child's development on any side is education, that the acquisition of

book-learning constitutes but a small part of this development, and that an education mainly bookish or intellectual is wrong. Sports, on the other hand, foster the growth of health, vigor, endurance, manliness, independence, and joyousness; they stimulate the love of nature and store the mind with images of beauty; they teach the child to get along with his fellows and to endure what he does not understand. It was the positive and elemental that Wordsworth stressed—qualities, not skills or learning. These last could, if necessary, be acquired later; the main thing was that the child should have his full life *as a child*, that he should not be “a dwarf Man” (A 295) or “a miracle of scientific lore” (315) but a normal boy. Such a boy, as Wordsworth well knew, was usually too vigorous, independent, and care-free to become the passive “model of a child” whose name “the wandering beggars propagate” (299, 305). Rarely would he be checked “by innocence too delicate” (xiv. 339) or be

Too learned, or too good; but wanton, fresh,  
And bandied up and down by love and hate;  
Not unresentful where self-justified;  
Fierce, moody, patient, venturous, modest, shy;  
Mad at . . . sports. (412-16)

Such youth made the best men and it was because the life at Hawkshead bred such youth that Wordsworth praised it, not for the schooling, which was ordinary enough (408-10).

Systematic intellectual training, although he ignored it, he undoubtedly took for granted, just as he assumed that

White Sirius glittering o'er the southern crags,  
Orion with his belt, and those fair Seven

would be

Acquaintances of every little child. (iv. 244-6)

Perhaps he also took for granted the study of nature, the close observation of particular plants and animals, the pollenization of flowers, the bark, leaves, and shape of trees, the nests, food, and habits of birds. Yet it may be that it was with all these things as with poetry and other imaginative literature, which he valued highly and was much indebted to but which

he does not mention: he may well have felt that books, formal teaching, and organized knowledge had been overemphasized until they played far too large a part in education. "Untaught things, Creative and enduring" (xiii. 310-11) seemed to him much more important than what was learned in schools. Emerson noted in 1833 as "his favorite topic"

. . . that society is being enlightened by a superficial tuition, out of all proportion to its being restrained by moral culture. Schools do no good. Tuition is not education. He thinks more of the education of circumstances than of tuition.<sup>6</sup>

A few years earlier he had written:

Education, I need not remark to you, is everything that *draws out* the human being, of which *tuition*, the teaching of schools especially, however important, is comparatively an insignificant part. Yet the present bent of the public mind is to sacrifice the greater power to the less; all that life and nature teach, to the little that can be learned from books and a master. . . . The wisest of us expect far too much from school teaching.<sup>7</sup>

Near the end of his life, in commenting on an educational report, he asked if

too little value is not set upon the occupations of Children out of doors . . . comparatively with what they do or acquire in school? Is not the Knowledge inculcated by the Teacher, or derived under his management, from books, too exclusively dwelt upon, so as almost to put out of sight that which comes, without being sought for, from intercourse with nature and from experience in the actual employments and duties which a child's situation in the Country, however unfavorable, will lead him to or impose upon him?<sup>8</sup>

One feature of the child's training that he particularly stressed is freedom (see 224-78, 332-6, 355-63). Fortunate were he and Coleridge both as men and as poets in that instead of being "noosed" they were left free to wander

Through heights and hollows, and bye-spots of tales  
Rich with indigenous produce, open ground  
Of Fancy, happy pastures rang'd at will! (A 235-7)

This is what would be expected of a person so self-willed as Wordsworth (iii. 355 n.) and one who, as his poetry reveals,

gained immeasurably from unusual liberty in unregulated sports and in wandering about at all hours alone or with other boys. Such wandering was not merely physical, for he observed: "my earliest days at school . . . were very happy ones, chiefly because I was left at liberty . . . to read whatever books I liked."<sup>9</sup> Nor was his insistence on freedom merely an expression of personal desires, for in later years he voiced his "utter distrust of all attempts to nurse virtue by an avoidance of temptation."<sup>10</sup>

Some qualities which receive much attention in other parts of *The Prelude* and which Wordsworth undoubtedly felt should be nurtured in early years are not mentioned here. These include imaginative and creative power, right feeling, and the sense of mystery (417-19) and of wonder. Presumably he did not believe that a conscious effort should be made to cultivate these capacities but that the child should be given the opportunities to develop them in himself by being placed in an environment favorable to their growth. For education, as Wordsworth conceived it, is a way of life. James Fotheringham, in a small book that unfortunately is as scarce as it is sound and stimulating, calls attention to Wordsworth's insistence on "right, sound, active, vital feeling."

In a phrase [he remarks] . . . that is in true sympathy with the best naturalism of his age, the "vital soul" is the ground of all real education, and the free expansion of the "vital soul" is the true end of education. . . . In . . . the *Prelude* . . . And in other poems of his great period it is a leading idea. There is no real and right growth for human minds without depth and cordiality of feeling. The culture that does not give this is barren, and in a large degree a failure.<sup>11</sup>

This, however, is implied rather than said in v, which likewise is silent (except for the satirical picture of an infant prodigy) as to deliberate moral teaching whether direct or carefully planned but indirect. Of this last, contemporary educational theorists had much to say. In xiv. 162-70 the poet attributes much of what is commendable in himself to the development during his boyhood of fear and love; but although fear is referred to in 307, 419, and 451-9 of the present book, nothing is said in it of love. The affections and human sympathies were fostered at Hawkshead by the unusual custom of having



the boys live not in school buildings but with the villagers. They thus entered into the community life and established sound human relationships with families other than their own.<sup>12</sup> The account of the return to Hawkshead during the first long vacation (iv. 27-92, 191-230) suggests that Wordsworth thought highly of the system. But he realized that feeling must not only be cultivated it must be disciplined, and that a public school with its sports and rough-and-tumble companionship with other boys affords an admirable means of acquiring emotional control and emotional stability. He speaks with gratitude and insight of what he himself had gained by being compelled

In hardy independence, to stand up  
Amid conflicting interests, and the shock  
Of various tempers; to endure and note  
What was not understood, though known to be.<sup>13</sup>

(This passage recalls Wordsworth's repeated insistence on the importance of the active, creative powers of the mind (see ii. 245-61 n.). The life at Hawkshead favored the growth of untought powers "creative and enduring" (xiii. 310-11) whereas the traditional education regarded the child's mind as, in the main, passive and receptive. Wordsworth would have agreed with Froebel that only by creative activity does mind grow and knowledge become real.<sup>14</sup> Analysis, on the other hand, a favorite method in schools, he distrusted (ii. 203-32 n.), believing, as Fotheringham remarks, "that the right method in knowledge and therefore in education is constructive, not analytic; that the real apprehension of things is a creative and not a mechanical process. Taking things to bits, and regarding them singly, we never know them" (p. 37).

In "arts and letters" Wordsworth's early training was, as he himself recognized (410), inadequate. Of music, painting, sculpture, and architecture he probably learned nothing; of natural, political, and social science, very little; and of history, not a great deal more. By these limitations he was handicapped throughout life more than he realized;<sup>15</sup> but such subjects received very little attention in the schools of his day.

Since *The Prelude* is in the main a study of the imagination it is regrettable that it contains no direct comment on the rela-

tion of books and education to the development of this faculty, that it has, for example, nothing like the later criticism of a report dealing with elementary schools for paying "too little attention . . . to books of imagination which are eminently useful in calling forth intellectual power."<sup>16</sup> Nor are we told in it that the description of the Boy of Winander illustrates the planting of "images of sound and sight, in the celestial soil of the Imagination" (de S., 531). To be sure, the education which is here praised is admirably adapted to encouraging the growth of this faculty just as that which is ridiculed is to crushing it. The books, too, that are praised, *Jack the Giant-killer* and the like, are those which Wordsworth felt—although he does not say this in the poem—were bound to stimulate the child's imagination. Indeed it is possible that in writing v he consciously or unconsciously had the development of the imagination in mind and that the unusual emphasis and striking omissions were due to his preoccupation with the faculty which is, for the poet at least, of supreme importance.

Professor de Selincourt thinks that v was composed between the latter part of February and the 29th of March, 1804. But, as I have pointed out at the beginning of the notes to III, what is now v may have been the third book composed and if so, some of v may have been written between 26 December, 1801, and January 11, 1803, and the remainder between January and the middle of February, 1804. Since lines corresponding to 364-88 are found in MS JJ, they were originally composed at Goslar between the middle of September, 1798, and the end of February, 1799; and the same may well be true of 426-50, an early form of which occurs in MS V.

To the list of "MSS for Bk. v" should now be added: "for II. [A] 389-413 JJ."

1-11. The six variants of these opening lines show with how much labor the serene beauty of the final version was achieved.

✓4-11. (Just as the perishable nature of most beautiful objects led Keats to see in the very temple of Delight the sovran shrine of veiled Melancholy, so Wordsworth finds a subject for grief in man's very achievements because of the perishable nature of books, in which alone "the consecrated works of Bard and Sage" (42) are preserved.)

8-10. Owing to his emphasis on intuition and his distrust of analytical reason Wordsworth seldom expresses his admiration for achievements of this sort.

14. *intercourse*: Continuing the figure of "speaking" (13): earth and heaven constitute a face which speaks, or carries on intercourse, with men.

16. *that bodily image*: "The speaking face of earth and heaven."

A 16 The progress of this line toward orthodoxy may be traced in D<sup>2</sup> and E, which also reveal Wordsworth's uncertainty as to what he meant by "participate." Although A 14-16 suggests that a divine soul is diffused equally through nature and through man—which was the reason for omitting A 16,— "the sovereign Intellect" transcends both so that the passage cannot be called pantheistic. Nor can the soul be the *anima mundi*, since it is divine and since man participates in it. It is like the Holy Spirit conceived as a force rather than as a person. See p. 196 above. Line 17 seems to imply that the immanence of the Divine in the external world is a delusion, but such was certainly not Wordsworth's belief and the line was probably added to placate those who were frightened by the "Spinozistic" tendencies of certain of his poems.<sup>17</sup>

19. As compared with man's intercourse with external nature, referred to in 11-18.

23. *our immortal being*: A has "the," which by completely parallel structure emphasizes the contrast with "the child of earth" (25).

28. For other lines made up entirely of adjectives see vi. 505 n.

31, 45. Monosyllabic; 29, 30, and 33 are nearly so. See ii. 41-5 n.

33. Prolepsis.

34. Cf. A 14-17. The reading of MS W suggests the *anima mundi* and may be pantheistic; see Chapter IX.

40. *reason*: See pp. 138-9, 362-4 above; *passion*: see p. 36 above and cf. xiv. 188-92, where imagination, which is inseparable from spiritual love (a form of passion), is said to be "but another name for . . . Reason in her most exalted mood." "Passion," "Bard," and "sensuous" are connected and "rea-

son," "Sage," and "intellectual"; 44 reinforces 40-1 in pointing out how close may be the connection between the "twin labourers," "Bard and Sage."

47. That is, immaterial and immortal.

50-9. "Rocky" (58), "so it chanced" (59), and all of 51-6 might better have been omitted.

65. For Wordsworth's interest in mathematics see vi. 115-67 n.

71-140. Most of the changes introduced into the later text (of which 71-5, 80-4, 90-1, 100-1, 107-10, 115-19, 127-9, 135-6 are the chief) are improvements; but 82 and 90-1 are dubious additions and in 100-1 the bald Biblical simplicity of A 101-2 has been replaced by colorless prose; "mine eyes" (127) is also much inferior to "I" (A 128). The repetition of "at my side" (74-75) and "looked" (84) is an excellent late addition. "Arabian" (A 71) was unnecessary in view of A 77-8; A 89 and A 91 were wisely dropped. A 109 was rewritten at least five times.

104-5. The substitution of "soul" and "reason" for "man" and "nature" (A 105-6) make for clarity. "Purest bond Of nature" (A 105-6) means the most objective, impersonal, and congenital bond between men, i. e. the reason. "Undisturbed by space or time" is close to xi. 330.

136. This splendid line was not achieved until 1832 or 1839 when "Still in his grasp" (135) was also substituted for the weaker "Beneath his arm" (A 134) and the vivid "over . . . bed of" (128-9) was added. The story of the dream, gaining in power and breadth as it proceeds, reaches a superb climax and then dies down in a quiet, simple close (139-40). Like the vision of the Druids (xiii. 312-49), it illustrates Wordsworth's power in a field which he seldom entered.

141-293. There are few changes from the earliest to the latest texts of these lines.

151-2. Impressive lines which, like those that follow, are illuminating as to Wordsworth's personality.

✓ 162. The early form of this line suggests more strongly than does the later those experiences akin to the mystic and usually marked by partial loss of consciousness which Wordsworth treasured in grateful memory as things divine (viii. 559).

168-9. Did Wordsworth overlook what is gained by association and conversation with man, or did he rate living "guides And . . . helpers" below books? See ix. 288 n. Line 169 is a late addition.

A 182b-4a. Skilfully and, despite the interesting revelation in A 183-4, wisely omitted. "No, no" is close to the ridiculous.

190. *insuperable*: Incapable of being passed over.

192-222. "What everybody feels I will leave registered in the hearts, tongues, tears, and looks of all; what is peculiar to myself will remain working within myself; I shall merely assert the rights and honors of all books, lofty or humble, that men have loved."

194. The comma after "sown" should be after "pleasure," as in A 195.

195. *Peculiar to myself*: Many incidents in *The Prelude* were "peculiar" to Wordsworth in the sense that they were unlike what happens to most poets or other men; but he has in mind matters which were of merely personal interest or which contributed nothing to his development. These he usually passed over or eliminated in revision; see vi. 323-5 n., 420-88 n.; x. A 472-5, A 488-99; xi. 58 n.; xiv. 3 n. and pp. 271-3 above, and contrast Rousseau's *Confessions*. The avoidance of "transitory themes" mentioned in 223-4 and of local names (see viii. A 228-43 n.) springs from the same desire, that the poem be universal—another instance of Wordsworth's classicism.

196. *still it works*: An interesting addition.

197-222. One sentence of 25 lines. Cf. vii. 685-705, x. 154-90, xi. 333-70, xiii. 16-39, 64-88.

197. *time*: Cf. viii. 558 and end of note to viii. 543-59.

213. *these*: All books, from the loftiest to the humblest, which seize the heart of man (198-200); prose though mentioned in 200, is not included in the enumeration that follows (202-15).

216. *rights*: Their rights to be recognized as Powers (218-22).

217. *once for all*: i. e. once for all in this poem.

218-22. Cf. xiii. 309-12.

218. *Powers*: An approach to the animistic use of "Powers,"

usually connected with nature, which is discussed in xiv. 113 n. and in Chapter v. Cf. also 555-6 and viii. 597-607 n.

222. Or [only less than] the Bible. Observe that A 222 clearly implies the transcendence of the Deity.

223-425. This long discussion of education is not entirely irrelevant since an account of a poet's development may well consider what early training best promotes that development. Indeed the entire *Prelude* is a study in education. Thanks largely to Rousseau's *Émile*, to the vogue of primitivism and of liberal thought in all fields, educational theory attracted an unusual amount of attention toward the close of the eighteenth century. It will be remembered that Wordsworth and his sister undertook the education of Basil Montagu's son and hoped for more pupils. Dorothy's letters to Jane Marshall of November 30, 1795, March 7, 1796, and March 19, 1797, speak of reading *The Fool of Quality* (pedagogical fiction) and suggest that advanced theories were being tried on young Montagu (see also "Anecdote for Fathers" and de S., 528-9). The poet's interest in education is apparent throughout the early books of *The Prelude* (especially in the comment on universities, iii. 371-505) and in xiii. 168-72; xiv. 329-47. In *Excursion*, ix. 293-362 (see n.), he urged compulsory elementary education, which he later opposed.<sup>18</sup> These and other utterances show that his interest in the subject continued throughout life.

228-45. Cf. Coleridge's fourth autobiographical letter to Thomas Poole (1797): "I have known some who have been rationally educated, as it is styled. They were marked by a microscopic acuteness . . . and called the want of imagination, judgment, and the never being moved to rapture, philosophy."

230-1. For the education of Nature see "Three years she grew" and xiii. 20-39; it is exemplified in the youth of the Wanderer (*Excursion*, i. 108-433). "Positive instruction, even of a religious character," Wordsworth wrote to his brother, April 27, 1830, "is much overrated." He disliked being bound to regular times and seasons or set tasks; he rebelled against any regulation of his life by another (see vi. 32-3 n.). He felt that he owed much as a poet to the remarkable freedom he had enjoyed (including the freedom to read what he pleased)<sup>19</sup> and to his association from infancy with beautiful and sublime

natural objects. Such an education is, so far as it goes, excellent and "natural." Its defects are likely to be in the line of book learning (to which, owing to his strong anti-rationalism,<sup>20</sup> Wordsworth often expressed greater indifference than he felt), of excessive individualism, and of lack of self-discipline. Lines 230-1 suggest that Wordsworth regarded his early school-training also as "natural" and therefore excellent. This is the more likely since the general manner of life at Hawkshead was simple and since most persons confuse what they are accustomed to with the dictates of nature. But going to school and studying books is hardly following nature, especially if, as at Hawkshead, the books deal chiefly with Greek, Latin, and mathematics. Furthermore in urging that children should be allowed to follow what appear to be their natural inclinations Wordsworth overlooks the fact that these inclinations are the product of heredity and environment and so differ greatly from child to child. Much that he attributed to nature or to education was really due to the excellent stock from which he came and to the healthy, hardy activity of his early years. Yet in pointing out the good side of his own early training and the priggishness which results from an exclusively intellectual education, he is eminently sane.

232-9. In Rousseau's system the child, though apparently free is "followed, hourly watched, and [Wordsworth may have felt] noosed"; cf. 350-8.

✓ 246-93. Wordsworth is here giving a vivid and unqualified expression to his faith in the instincts of the child. This faith—implied in much of his poetry and definitely affirmed in 272-8 (cf. 359-63)—is a part of his general belief in the supreme value of intuitive knowledge (cf. vi. 39-40, *Excursion*, iv. 631-46, Chapter VIII, and pp 136-7 above), which is responsible for most of his anti-rationalism.) It is fundamentally opposed to Godwinism. Presumably he is exaggerating when he suggests that the mother's chief function is to love and to provide a center for her children. Viscount Grey remarks "the mother bird does lead the young where the best food is to be found."<sup>21</sup> This tender and discriminating account of the wisdom with which she brought up her children, and the loving tribute to her in *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, III. xxii are the

only references to his mother that I recall in Wordsworth's poetry. Line 290a seems to refer to the ministry of nature.

260-6. These lines, particularly 262, sound like a thrust at the Cooksons, Wordsworth's mother's family, with whom Dorothy lived until 1789 and with whom William and his brothers spent part of some of their vacations. They antagonized the homeless children by their lack of sympathy and by petty, arbitrary regulations. Lines 263-4 may mean, "I could easily make clear the wisdom of my mother's way by contrasting it with that of the Cooksons, who, believing that children do not know what is good for them, gave us little freedom. But, as it would be an affront to her memory to criticize her mother, father, and brother, I am checked."

284-7. Cf. xii. 156-61; xiii. 61-3. With 279-83 cf. iv. 223. Wordsworth praises his mother because she wished her children to be real children, not imitation men and women like the infant prodigy satirized in 298-336. This point is emphasized in A 294-7, which is not in the final text. Froebel writes:

Das Kind, der Knabe, der Mensch überhaupt soll kein anderes Streben haben, als auf jeder Stufe ganz das zu sein, was die Stufe fordert. Dann wird jede folgende Stufe wie ein neuer Schuss aus einer gesunden Knospe hervorschießen, und er wird auch auf jeder folgenden Stufe bei gleichem Streben bis zur Vollendung wieder das werden, was diese Stufe fordert; denn nur die genügende Entwicklung des Menschen in und auf jeder vorhergehenden früheren bewirkt, erzeugt eine genügende vollendete Entwicklung jeder folgenden spätern Stufe.<sup>22</sup>

✓ 293-346. One of the relatively few satirical passages in the poetry of Wordsworth, who as a rule has too little humor, too little deftness and lightness of touch to do this sort of thing well. (Yet see vii. 486-511 n.) There are satirical touches in iii. 25-9, 35-42, 506-8, 534-49; iv. 216-30; vii. 486-511, 544-72, 675-721. Wordsworth's early imitations of Juvenal will be found in letters to Wrangham of November 20, 1795, and of February 27, 1797 (misdated 1796 in de S. edition).

The success of 326-7 results not only from the vivid concreteness of the figure but from brevity, which in the surrounding lines, except for the amusing A 339, is to seek. Wordsworth was himself aware of these defects for he wrote opposite A 299-328 "this is heavy and must be shortened" (de S., 529)



and ultimately did retrench the description by nearly a third. A 350-4 probably seemed too strong but the figure of the body found by explorers which disintegrates on exposure to the air, though ill-expressed, is excellent. The final version is one of the most elaborately reconstructed passages in *The Prelude*: A 291b-7, A 305-6, A 308b-10a, A 314-15a, A 318b-30, A 338-40, A 350-4a, A 363 are omitted from the final text, which adds only 294b-8a, 299, 303b-4, and 328-9a (suggested by the A<sup>2</sup> addition to A 340); A 315-18 (307-9) is put ahead of A 307-13 (310-14), and A 354b-62 (329b-36) between A 331-45 (316-27) and A 346-9 (337-40). Besides these changes a number of additions and variations were introduced from time to time which were later discarded.

293-4. *My drift . . . obvious*: The leading article in the *Times Literary Supplement* for April 29, 1926, points out that, bad as this line is, it has been worked over: it was dropped from A<sup>2</sup> and C and revised for D<sup>2</sup>.

294b-7. Substituted for A 291b-7. The first line and a half is an improvement but the dropping of A 294-7 (see 284-7 n.) is not.

307. *fear*: Contrast 419, 450-3a and see Chapter III.

310. *notices*: This may mean what he observes, his comments on what he observes, or both. One of the meanings given in the *NED* is, "specifically of babies: To show signs of intelligent observation."

341-6. Cf. 460-533, *Excursion*, i. 177-85. In 1806 Wordsworth wrote a long letter to a friend concerning the training of his daughter in the course of which he urged that her defects should be corrected, not

by preaching to her . . . nor by overrunning her infancy with books about good boys and girls, and bad boys and girls, and all that trumpery; but . . . by putting her in the way of acquiring without measure or limit such knowledge as will lead her out of herself, such knowledge as is interesting for its own sake; . . . in a word, by leaving her at liberty to luxuriate in such feelings and images as will feed her mind in silent pleasure. This nourishment is contained in fairy tales, romances, the best biographies and histories, and such parts of natural history . . . as belong to it, not as an art or science, but as a magazine of form and feeling. This kind of knowledge is purely good, a direct

antidote to every evil to be apprehended, and food absolutely necessary to preserve the mind of a child like yours from morbid appetites. . . .

Lastly comes that class of objects which are interesting almost solely because they are known, and the knowledge may be displayed; and this unfortunately comprehends three fourths of what, according to the plan of modern education, children's heads are stuffed with; that is, minute, remote, or trifling facts . . . things of no value in themselves, but as they show cleverness.<sup>23</sup>

In a lecture on education delivered at the Royal Institution in May, 1808, Coleridge said:

I infinitely prefer the little books of "The Seven Champions of Christendom," "Jack the Giant Killer," etc., etc.—for at least they make the child forget himself—to your moral tales where a good little boy comes in and says, "Mama, I met a poor beggar man and gave him the sixpence you gave me yesterday. Did I do right?"—"O, yes, my dear; to be sure you did" This is not virtue, but vanity; such books and such lessons do not teach goodness, but—if I might venture such a word—goodness.<sup>24</sup>

According to Tomalin's report of the fifth of the lectures on Shakespeare and Milton delivered in 1811-12, Coleridge, after referring again to the good little boy and the beggar, exclaimed:

Give me the works which delighted my youth. Give me the *History of St. George* and the *Seven Champions of Christendom*, which at every leisure moment I used to hide myself in a corner to read. Give me the *Arabian Nights Entertainments*. . . . I heard of no little Billies, and sought no praise for giving to beggars.<sup>25</sup>

This attack on infant prodigies is much like the one before us not only in spirit and in general point of view but in details. Coleridge's story of the model child who gives his sixpence to the beggar is implied in the line, "The wandering beggars propagate his name" (305); both poets mention the adventures of Jack the Giant-Killer and of St. George; Coleridge adds the *Arabian Nights*, which is praised enthusiastically as a children's book a hundred lines later in Wordsworth's poem; and finally both say that "at least" such tales make "the child forget himself." As the two men had probably discussed the subject more than once it is likely that the ideas belonged as much to the one as to the other. But Coleridge's phrasing of

them, and even the idea of introducing them into a lecture, he probably derived from the fifth book of *The Prelude*, which he first read four years before he made use of them in public. In his fourth autobiographical letter to Poole, written late in 1797, Coleridge remarked:

From my early reading of fairy tales and about geni<sup>u</sup>, and the like, my mind had been habituated to *the Vast*; and I never regarded *my senses* in any way as the *criteria* of my belief. I regulated all my creeds by my conceptions, not by my sight, even at that age. Ought children to be permitted to read romances, and stories of giants, magicians, and geni<sup>u</sup>? I know all that has been said against it; but I have formed my faith in the affirmative. I know no other way of giving the mind a love of the Great and the Whole. Those who have been led to the same truths step by step, through the constant testimony of their senses, seem to me to want a sense which I possess. They contemplate nothing but parts, and all parts are necessarily little, and the universe to them is but a mass of little things.

Presumably it is a mere coincidence that, just about the time Wordsworth was composing v, William Godwin in a private letter expressed much the same opinions on this same subject. Contemporary educators, he declared,

aim at cultivating one faculty, and I another. I hold that a man is not an atom less a man, if he lives and dies without the knowledge they are so desirous of accumulating in the heads of children. Add to which, these things may be learned at any age, while the imagination, the faculty for which I declare, if cultivated at all, must be begun with in youth. Without imagination there can be no genuine ardour in any pursuit, or for any acquisition, and without imagination there can be no genuine morality, no profound feeling of other men's sorrow, no ardent and persevering anxiety for their interests. This is the faculty which makes the man, and not the miserable minutenesses of detail about which the present age is so uneasy. Nor is it the only misfortune that these minutenesses engross the attention of children: I would proscribe them from any early share, and would maintain that they freeze up the soul, and give a premature taste for clearness and exactness, which is of the most pernicious consequence.<sup>26</sup>

Among the books he recommends are *Mother Goose*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Fortunatus*, *The Seven Champions of Christendom*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and the *Arabian Nights*.

346. *he forgets himself*: In so doing he is fundamentally different from the model child; note especially 322-31. Viscount Grey praises at length the "far-reaching wisdom and interest" of this remark.<sup>27</sup>

347-50. Although this passage was suggested by *Paradise Lost*, x. 229-305, Wordsworth presumably did not intend to imply that the later bridge-builders were like Sin and Death.

350. *Tamed*: A past participle dependent on "chaos."

353. *keepers of our time*: Those who watch over our [i. e., children's] hours; cf. A 376 and "wardens of our faculties" (354).

356-8. Wordsworth may have heard through Humphrey Davy (who interviewed "the father of the locomotive engine," Richard Trevithick, early in 1802) of the engines with which in December, 1801, early in 1803, and in February, 1804, passengers had been carried along roads.

358-63. Cf. 270-8, 406-25, 491-5 and n.; xiv. 329-41. Anti-intellectual, anti-rational, anti-Godwinian, sane, conservative, and characteristically English. In A 385 and A 516 the S of "Spirit" is capitalized, which would suggest a personal deity (cf. 15-18) or a vague animism were not capital letters used freely and indiscriminately in A (see 491-5 n.).

364-88. In his admirable chapter, "Elements," Professor Garrod writes:

Wordsworth makes no approach to myriad-mindedness. Not only has he but one mind—I would almost go so far as to say that he has only one idea, and that easily divined. [He then quotes from this passage and proceeds] Wordsworth's starting-point, the well-head of all his thinking, is either that experience or some one or other variation of it. It may be called a perfectly familiar experience. . . . Wordsworth starts always from the fact (guaranteed by at any rate the occasional experience even of the most unimaginative persons), that very often the impression of some natural object or phenomenon, of some familiar incident, an impression simple and purely sensuous, is able to set up a mood of mind or feeling in which the object contemplated is suddenly released from the tie of custom and becomes the source of a mysterious spiritual exaltation. (Wordsworth, pp. 96-7)

The account of this experience, as of many of those Professor Garrod has in mind, was written in Goslar. It is the

only part of Book v that is found in MS JJ, where it comes near the end, immediately after the episode of the borrowed boat (i. 357-400). Why it was not copied into MS V is not clear since it and the brief xii. 41-7 are the only lines in JJ that are not also in MS V. It is not in W because it still formed a part of Book I, which W omits. It is well to remember that neither this incident, nor that which follows—the sight of the drowned man's body—was originally written for the place it now occupies. The same is certainly true of several other passages in the poem and probably of many more, some of which were presumably composed as isolated bits of verse. See iv. 354-469 n. and pp. 277-8, 331 above. The reason for inserting the present passage here is apparent from 389-425: the boy is a product of that better education, in the main not derived from books, which leads to the formulation of "real feeling and just sense" (xiii. 172). In fact we are allowed to watch the educational process itself: the boy's intercourse with nature and the planting in his imagination for immortality of images of sound and sight. Furthermore, in the reflections called forth by this incident (406-25), we are reminded of what a child may gain from rough-and-tumble play with his fellows.

Professor de Selincourt's illuminating quotation (p. 531) from Wordsworth's Preface should be supplemented by the poet's elaboration of the point to De Quincey:

'I have remarked, from my earliest days, that, if under any circumstances, the attention is energetically braced up to an act of steady observation, or of steady expectation, then, if this intense condition of vigilance should suddenly relax, at that moment any beautiful, any impressive visual object, or collection of objects, falling upon the eye, is carried to the heart with a power not known under other circumstances. Just now, my ear was placed upon the stretch, in order to catch any sound of wheels that might come down upon the lake of Wythburn from the Keswick road: at the very instant when I raised my head from the ground, in final abandonment of hope for this night, at the very instant when the organs of attention were all at once relaxing from their tension, the bright star hanging in the air above those outlines of massy blackness, fell suddenly upon my eye, and penetrated my capacity of apprehension with a pathos and a sense of the Infinite, that would not have arrested me under other circumstances.' He then went

on to illustrate the same psychological principle from [the incident we are considering].<sup>28</sup>

De Quincey adds a comment on line 383: "This very expression, 'far,' by which space and its infinities are attributed to the human heart, and to its capacities of re-echoing the sublimities of nature, has always struck me as with a flash of sublime revelation."

The incident is like that described in ii. 164-74. It was cited by Wordsworth as "one of the earliest processes of Nature in the development of" the imagination (Preface, 1815, quoted de S., 531, see pp. 221-2 above). As to the two Raincock boys see iii. 19-21 n. and Knight, II, 59-60.

379-88. As early as 1798 Coleridge's critical insight enabled him to realize that the concluding lines of this paragraph were distinctive of their author. It is an impressive tribute to Wordsworth's genius that, after nearly a hundred and fifty years of nature poetry which owes much to him, they are still so. No other verse or prose gives us the haunting sense of the beauty, the mystery, and the awe of mountains, silent, lonely valleys, the sky, and the night as does this passage and many of its fellows. It is usually persons who are not interested in this kind of natural beauty who do not care for Wordsworth's work.

380. *silence*: See Chapter IV.

386-8. Professor de Selincourt (*P. W., Youth*, p. 359) compares "Characteristics of a Child," 20-1:

The many-coloured images imprest  
Upon the bosom of a placid lake.

389-425. As these lines are not in JJ, V, or W, they represent a notable achievement: the return to a passage of rare beauty written some years earlier, continuing it in a style no less noble and moving, and adapting it with perfect ease to an entirely new setting. Yet there is a difference between the old and the new. The former is more objective, the latter more tender, wistful, personal; in the former there is no comment, in the latter the significance of the incident to the matter in hand is dwelt upon. Furthermore, in JJ the boy is the poet himself; in the later texts he becomes another youth who died in his twelfth year and at whose grave Wordsworth often lingered. Although

379-88 describe the poet's own experience and although the boy who died young seems not to have been distinguished for his "mimic hootings," 364-88 gains clarity and consistency by being in the third person throughout, and objectivity and pathos by being made to refer to another boy who died in childhood. Furthermore, when told of one long since dead the incident is touched with the pathos of the long ago which marks the final stanza of Keats's "Eve of St. Agnes." If these changes represent a simplification and, in unimportant particulars, misrepresentation of what actually occurred, they furnish one more illustration of the truth that *The Prelude* was by no means intended to be a factual autobiography. See ix. 28 n., 40-1 n., and pp. 270-1, 283 above. A 389-413 shows a number of other improvements over the version in JJ. Still further improvement over the A version is shown in 379-80, 395, 398 (A 404-5, A 420, A 423), which, according to the Errata, first appeared in D<sup>2</sup>, were made as late as 1832 or 1839. Line 414 is not in A. 391-7. Cf. vii. 320-8.

400. In iv. 21-3.

401-6. Pathos mingled with the clear-sighted facing of reality.

406-25. Admirably sensible, virile, and realistic (contrast ii. 65-71), tinged with anti-intellectualism, and affording an interesting contrast to the "model of a child" who never quarrels (299-301, cf. 413-14), knows no fear (307-9, cf. 418-19), does not play (303-4, 337-40, cf. 416-20), but is preternaturally wise (315-27, cf. 411-12) and virtuous (301-6, cf. 411-15). Lines 417-9 are close to xiv. 329-41 (A xiv. 313-25 is better), one of Wordsworth's sanest utterances on the subject of education. Unless he thought of men as entirely distinct from boys, it is hard to reconcile the present passage or that in xiv with viii. 301-39, in which he asserts that he came to love men because he first saw them "purified, Removed, and to a distance that was fit: And so we all . . . Are led to knowledge." On 415 see vi. 505 n.

423. *books*: Although the present paragraph, like the five that precede it, belittles what may be gained from books, 423-5 and to some extent 408-10 give a certain factitious unity to v by relating the discussion of education to its subject, books.

Similar unifying patchwork is used in 453-9. Furthermore "that sweet Valley" (428) binds the incident of the drowned man to that of the boy of Winander, and 463 (A 485-6 is clearer) connects what is said about the *Arabian Nights* with 426-30 and so with the drowned man. The drowned man and the *Arabian Nights* are directly connected through 453-9.

425. As to Wordsworth's preferring power to knowledge see viii. 597-607 n.

426-59. This paragraph begins somewhat abruptly since, as the reader (having forgotten 391-2) is not thinking of any "sweet Valley," the attempt made in the opening lines to connect the episode with that of the boy of Winander is none too successful. The ultimate reason for this abruptness is clear from MS V: the incident originally formed part of Book I and had no connection with the boy (not mentioned in MS V) who "blew mimic hootings to the silent owls." The reason alleged for transferring the story to Book v, that it illustrates the power of literature to decorate a ghastly spectacle with ideal grace, is not convincing; possibly Wordsworth felt that v needed incidents of beauty and impressiveness. He could think of no reason (other than "vulgar fear," which he rejected) for the scene's impressing him as it did and accordingly he evolved one, as he had done in the case of the discharged soldier (see iv. 354-469 n.). Considerable light is thrown on this rationalizing process, and on the more important question of the transformation of reality in the poetic mind, by MS V. In this early form of the story Wordsworth makes clear (1) that he is puzzled as to its significance ("such effects as cannot here be regularly classed," ix-x of V variant of A 450-72), (2) that he contents himself with the vague conclusion that it contributed to "the growth of mental powers And love of nature's works" (*ibid.*, x-xii) and (3) that he was conscious of attaching in his maturity to scenes which had originally impressed on his mind little more than visual imagery "far other feelings" and meanings (V version of A 472). See Part II: Introduction.

(It is noteworthy that Wordsworth dwells not upon the sight of the drowned body but upon the suspense during the search for it and especially during the evening before. The mystery, the solitude, the silence, the strangeness of the new locality,



and the growing darkness of this evening must have contributed materially to the impression made upon him (see Chapter IV). Fear likewise played its part (see Chapter III). The vivid memory for details (433-42) and the uncertainty as to his age at so memorable a time as first going away to school (452, and line xiii of V variant of A 450-72) are equally characteristic of Wordsworth.

A 450-72, V variant. In i. 401-98, of which this passage is a continuation, Wordsworth has illustrated the ministry of nature in various autumn and winter sports—skating, fishing, kite-flying—and, judging from i. 475-8, had some thought of continuing through all the seasons and all the major sports of his boyhood. The first ten lines of the variant we are considering are far from clear but they seem to mean: "I have many more such episodes to relate and might be pardoned if I continued to relate them, since I have much to say that does not fit any scheme and since my object would not be accomplished if from too rigid following of a plan I should omit matters not easily classified and on this account not to be fitted into the plan, although contributing quite as vitally as the other episodes to the development which it is the purpose of this poem to trace." "Venial" (iii), allowable, permissible, as in *Paradise Lost*, ix. 5, where God permits man "venial discourse unblamed." The change from "I" (iv) to "we" (v) is unpleasant. "Unity" (vii) reinforces the impression made by this entire variant: the selection and order of the incidents of *The Prelude* were more carefully considered than appears to be the case.

433. *ears*: Fields which would be islands were it not for the isthmus connecting each with the shore, much as the human ear is connected with the head. There are three such in Esthwaite but apparently none in the other lakes—which may be the reason for mentioning this irrelevant detail. The JJ variant of 365 invokes "ye green Peninsulas of Esthwaite" (cf. 434).

436. That is, on the opposite shore of the bay within the peninsula. The garments would hardly have appeared distinctly across the lake at twilight. A 460-2 has "I saw," "I suppos'd," "I watch'd," the first two of which are happily eliminated from 436-7.

439-42. The suspense is heightened by the vivid picture of the growing darkness and the breathless stillness. On Wordsworth's sensitiveness to sound see i. 82-5 n.

442, 444. Wordsworth wisely deleted the unnecessary details ("Soon . . . mention," W variant of A 466, "Of . . . spot," A<sup>2</sup>C variant of A 467-9) which his matter-of-factness had led him to add (see Chapter 1).

A 472, V variant. Cf. i. 597-612; viii. 162-72. *That impressed . . . attached* (v-vii): See 426-59 n. *Forms* (vii): Much the same thing as "images" (vi). *That yet exist . . . decay* (viii-ix): "That yet exist in my mind independent of the physical objects (some of them long since decayed) that gave rise to the impressions." *Archetypes* (cf. de S., 558, line 186): Suggests the Platonic theory of ideas or forms (note line vii and vi. 298).

457. *ideal grace*: Cf. vii. 480; xiv. 76; the sonnet, "No mortal object," 8 (the soul seeks "Ideal Form, the universal mould").

460-533. Cf. 341-6 and vii. 77-84 n. Possibly the dream described in 70-138 was influenced by the *Arabian Nights*.

A 482, A 485-6. Just as 453-9, which deals with the influence of romances, connects 426-53, the finding of the drowned man's body, with 460-80, the reading of the *Arabian Nights*, so these lines serve to bind the two incidents together chronologically. For, in view of 426-30, A 485-6, 473-5, 477-8, the sight of the drowned man's body must have come at about the same time as the discovery of the extent of the *Arabian Nights*. This connection is obscured in the final text with the result that 460, though more accurate, is more abrupt (it is likewise more formal) and 463, though less wordy, is less clear than A. See 497 n.

466-7. Prose.

468-76. It seems likely from A that this passage was originally intended to be somewhat humorous: note "a league, a covenant," "monies . . . amass'd . . . hoarded up And hoarded up." See i. 509-35 n.

474-5. A condensation of three lines in A through the omission of the auxiliary "did" and of the repeated "hoarded

up." This last might well have been kept if "hoard up" in 471 could have been eliminated.

477-8. Smoother but, like 460, more formal and accordingly not so well adapted to the subject as A 501-2.

480-2. Much more vivid than the matter-of-fact A 504-7 (A 504 is dropped); yet the lines that follow, pulsating with life and youth, are unchanged from A. There are other references to angling in i. 485-90, viii. 262-3.

481. *respites*: "The holidays" (478).

484. *Derwent*: See i. 269-300.

491-605. Except for 566-70 and A 630-7 there is nothing corresponding to these lines in W, the earliest of the MSS of the present book. How 566 is joined to 490 in W is not clear. ✓491-5. The "gracious spirit" may be "the sovereign Intellect, Who through that bodily image [the external world] hath diffused . . . A deathless spirit" (15-18, cf. 271-8), but in all probability nothing so transcendental was intended. In view of the extensive use of capitals in A (note "Tales," "Ladies," "Love," "Squires," "Warrior," in A 520-5) no weight can be attached to the capitalization of S in "Spirit" (A 516). The passage presumably means much the same thing as 359-63 and xiii. 279-82, "the inner frame is good, And graciously composed." The obvious "invisibly" and the unnecessary "And tendency benign" might well have been spared.

493-5. A general remark although Wordsworth seems to have been thinking chiefly of tellers of tales—or of such of them as, unconscious of the delight and profit they are laying up for future generations, write merely to solace themselves or to entertain their lady-loves. By changing the word-order and by substituting "unreproved . . . benign" for "love," 493-4 is made clearer and pleasanter though more formal than A 518.

495. An effective monosyllabic line. Except for "something," 504-5 are also monosyllabic.

497. The comma after "Araby" should be a semicolon, since "tales," "romances," "legends," "Fictions," and "adventures" are all in apposition with "These" (504). As 496-7 certainly refer to the *Arabian Nights*, they connect this paragraph directly with 460-76.

504. *spread like day*: Go everywhere, bringing joy with them.

- 506-7. Very close in thought to some lines in a rejected passage dealing with the ministry of wonder (de S., 553-9, lines 37-41, 80-4). Note especially "needful food" (39) and the assertion that fables and romances appease "the absolute necessities That struggle in us" (82-4). See also 540-1 n. and concluding paragraph of the note to 507-9.

✓ 507-9. Like many other passages that are widely known apart from their context, these lines are likely to be misunderstood. Some readers will think they mean merely that childhood has more power than all the elements—is all powerful. But this is not what Wordsworth wrote, nor is it true; childhood, as "simple" implies, is very weak, almost helpless. Others will interpret the lines in a sense that, taken by themselves, they might have, "The child is father of the man"—childhood is all potent because it determines what the future man is to be. But such an interpretation is impossible to any one who considers the lines in connection with the paragraph in which they occur. For they come in the midst of an ardent encomium on "romances; legends . . . Fictions . . . adventures endless" and "daring tales," and these are praised solely for the delight they yield. (Clearly what is meant is that the child, weak as he is, has the use of a very great power—just as by pressing an electric button he can start a huge dynamo. Neither intuition nor instinct can be meant since these bear no relation to "the elements" and play no part in Arabian tales or "fictions . . . devised By youthful squires." The reference must be to the imagination, the "moving soul" of *The Prelude* (xiv. A 171), of the power of which in Wordsworth's own simple childhood the present book and its predecessors furnish striking illustrations. Line 509 is explained by 529-33 where the word "elements" is repeated: the child's "heaven-born freedom" <sup>29</sup> from that subjection to "reality" under which most adults labor (xiv. 157-9) enables his imagination to have more power than the physical world, since it transcends time and space and in its hands that world is "potter's clay" to be remoulded as it desires.

The lines immediately following these imply that the child's

ability to wield remarkable powers is due to its having recently come from a world in which it was free of the manacles of space and time (contrast "stinted powers," 517). Yet there is no suggestion in this paragraph that the child is the "best Philosopher," the "Eye . . . That . . . read'st the eternal deep," or that its unquestioning acceptance of impossible fictions is one of those gifts "which we are toiling all our lives to find." Indeed (as in de S., 554-5, lines 37-41, 80-4) it seems to be no more than a faculty that keeps the child happy while it is learning to live in reconciliation with the meagre vassalage of earthly existence.)

510-22. This thought is more clearly expressed in stanzas v-xi of the Immortality Ode, written at least two years later than these lines; the reference to early infancy as "twilight" (513) suggests "Our birth is but a sleep" in the same Ode (58). Lines 512-22 recall i. 551-8, which (like 535-8 just below) also imply pre-existence. The present passage, however, differs from the others and from xii. 180-3 in that it pictures infancy as a troubled period.

520-2. The figure of the mettlesome young horse not yet broken to the yoke is excellent.

523-9. In the sonnet, "At Rome—Regrets," Wordsworth says of himself and of those who, like him, had been brought up believing in the legendary stories of early Rome:

in our hearts we know  
How, for exciting youth's heroic flame,  
Assent is power, belief the soul of fact.

525. *ape*: Apparently used in the obsolete adjectival sense, foolish. Wordsworth is here attacking those philosophies which hold that life should be ruled strictly by analytical reason or common sense and which have no place for "daring tales," wonder, and the imagination (see ii. 203-32 n. and pp. 130-41, 145-7 above). Godwin, though Wordsworth probably did not know it, was here in complete agreement with him (see end of note to 341-6).

527. That is, with the imagination. Lines 527-8 are monosyllabic.

531. *elements*: See 507-9 n.

534-45. Childhood and youth form an isthmus which connects the continent of pre-existence (see i. 551-8 n.) with that of maturity. With 535-6 "Mr. Doughty compares Pope, *Essay on Man*, ii. 3, 'Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state'" (de S., Addenda, p. [608 F]). But Wordsworth's own lines are more apposite:

While on that isthmus which commands  
The councils of both worlds. ("Presentiments," 70-1)

Wordsworth also has in mind the reconciliation of the child with his earthly lot. After "daring tales" have played their part they are succeeded by a literature "link'd to these" (A 559) in that it helps reconcile us to earthly existence (512-18), a literature which deals with life as it is; then, too, comes delight in "words themselves" (544). These new interests, it should be observed, may have very little in common; the one points towards realism, the other towards art for art's sake. From what follows it seems clear that when he wrote "words themselves" Wordsworth was thinking chiefly of poetry and especially of those features of poetry—poetic diction, rhythm, rime, rhetoric, sonorous or striking phrases—which distinguish it from every-day speech.

534-5. Substituted for A 558-9 because the "later pleasures" though more subtle hardly demanded and certainly did not receive "a more ambitious strain" than that of the brilliant passage which immediately precedes. On the contrary, 535 terms them "humbler ground."

538. *the Song might dwell*: Cf. i. 630; ii. 382. A 562, though awkward, is much better.

540-1. A similar development in the child's attitude towards external nature is pointed out in a rejected passage (de S., 554, lines 37-58, cf. 506-7 n., 507-9 n.), which does not, however, trace the growth of the taste for literature of "sober truth"—the theme of the lines before us.

545-52. These interesting but prosaic lines might much better come after 569-70 (which touch on the same thought) since the passage beginning "Twice five years" (552) develops the idea presented in "words . . . pleasure" (544-5). The connection is emphasized by the repetition of "words"

and "with conscious pleasure" (544-5, 554-5). Cf. ii. 332-8 n. Pope and Dryden were probably among the poets Wordsworth had in mind, see his annotations on Barron Field's manuscript memoir: "I have ten times more knowledge of Pope's writings, and of Dryden's also, than ever this writer [Hazlitt] had. To this day [c. 1836] I believe I could repeat, with a little previous rummaging of my memory, several thousand lines of Pope."<sup>30</sup>

556. *power*: Cf. 218 and see viii. 597-607 n.

558-66. This does not necessarily refer to the time when the young Wordsworth's mind first opened to the charm of verse (552-8).

573-7. These lines should prevent us from being misled by *Peter Bell*, 133-45:

The common growth of mother-earth  
Suffices me—her tears, her mirth,  
Her humblest mirth and tears.

The dragon's wing, the magic ring,  
I shall not covet for my dower,  
If I along that lowly way  
With sympathetic heart may stray,  
And with a soul of power.

These given, what more need I desire  
To stir, to soothe, or elevate?  
What nobler marvels than the mind  
May in life's daily prospect find,  
May find or there create?

Wordsworth was not a realist. In his poetry "the common growth of mother-earth" usually sufficed him for subject matter and materials,<sup>31</sup> although his chief concern was not with what the senses presented but with what the imagination creates out of sense-impressions. Yet his spirit craved other food: "tales . . . romances; legends . . . adventures endless" (496-507), and in the present passage he goes so far as to refer to the "wish for something loftier, more adorned" than every-day life as "that most noble attribute of man." See vii. 77-84 n. and pp. 19-21 above, 440 below.

579. *For*: Since. On "images" see vi. 158-60 n.

580. *encountered or pursued*: A, "with which we had to

do," is simpler and, in spite of the succession of monosyllables, better.

594-5. *the great Nature . . . Poets*: Contrasted with "glittering verse" (cf. 545-52, 569-70),—external nature as transformed by the imagination and embodied in great poetry. From such poetry "he, who in his youth . . . With living [i. e. external] Nature [which is apparently contrasted with "the great Nature" of 594] hath been intimate . . . doth receive . . . Knowledge and . . . joy" denied to those who have not known such intimacy.

595-605. "For," Wordsworth goes on to say, "visionary power resides in great nature poetry; the deep, mysterious things of life abide in it; and shadowy, unseen forces transform the impression of the external world given to us by our senses. In such poetry natural objects ["forms and substances"] as if in their true home are wrapt about by the transparent veil of verse—made, as it were, of woven light—and then appear not as they do to the senses but 'with decoration of ideal grace' (457) and as we see them in moments of insight." Here again Wordsworth insists on the creative powers of man (ii. 245-61 n.), which give to external nature a glory that it does not in itself possess and which are largely responsible for its ministry to the spirit. For the visionary power which may be derived from poetry comes, not from sense impressions, but from the transformation of those impressions by the imagination. Cf. *Excursion*, iii. 940, "With mind that sheds a light on what he sees.")

595. *Visionary power*: Cf. ii. 310-11 n. and viii. 597-607 n.

598. *darkness*: The potentiality of all things, hence "the hiding-places of man's power" (xii. 279). Cf. i. 394; ii. 302-22; vi. 481; xiii. 327; de S. n. to xiv. 63-76 and xiv. A 71; and pp. 39-42, 162 above.

599. The final text eliminates the unnecessary "do" and the unpleasant "their . . . there."

605. Cf. vi. 598-602—in which both "glory" and "flash" reappear.

A 633-7, M W variant. *abasement . . . books*: Cf. xiii. 207-20. For other remarks on books and reading in *The Prelude* see iii. A 524-30 n.



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in de S., 527. There is, to be sure, in 59-61 an incidental reference to reading Cervantes, perhaps in later life.

<sup>2</sup> See xiv 312-13. Yet on March 27, 1843, Wordsworth wrote Henry Reed, "In the Mss Poem upon my own Poetic education there is a whole Book of about 600 lines upon my obligations to writers of imagination, and chiefly the Poets"—which doubtless represents what v was intended to be.

<sup>3</sup> The *Arabian Nights* is, to be sure, much more than a children's book but Wordsworth treats it only as such.

<sup>4</sup> It is possible that the book grew in the opposite way, that Wordsworth began with the education and reading of children and then prefixed the long introductory passage. A third possibility is that he wrote the two parts independently and later joined them together. In any case the lack of unity may be due to the wide intervals which perhaps separated the composition of different parts of the book.

<sup>5</sup> They are conservative in that for elementary and secondary education Wordsworth favors the old-fashioned training he himself received and opposes the "workmen of our later age" (347) and their "modern system" (295).

<sup>6</sup> *English Traits*, chapter 1. In the Fenwick note to *The Excursion* Wordsworth refers slightly to "what is called a liberal education."

<sup>7</sup> Second letter to H. J. Rose, probably of December, 1828. Wellington remarked that Waterloo was won on the playing field of Eton; and Eric Gill recently asserted that through games, at which he was not particularly good, "we were really and truly and admirably educated at our school" (*Autobiography*, New York, 1941, p. 16).

<sup>8</sup> Letter to Seymour Tremenheere of December 16, 1845.

<sup>9</sup> Autobiographical Memoranda, *Memoirs*, I, 10 (Grosart, III, 220). In a letter to Seymour Tremenheere of December 16, 1845, he referred with satisfaction to his own early education in that he was "one who spent half of his boyhood in running wild among the Mountains."

<sup>10</sup> Mrs. Davy's Reminiscences (Grosart, III, 440).

<sup>11</sup> Wordsworth's "Prelude" as a Study of Education, 1899, pp. 31-3.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 51-4.

<sup>13</sup> It is characteristic of the unsystematic arrangement of *The Prelude* that these lines are found, not along with the present discussion of education, but in xiv. 331-6. Similarly the use of emulation as an incentive is criticized, not here, but in ii. 65-72 and, properly enough, in iii. 500-5 (see de S. n.).

<sup>14</sup> Fotheringham, pp. 37-43.

<sup>15</sup> See vi. 115-67 n.; ix 31 n. Wordsworth's indifference to science is sharply criticized by Herbert Dingle in *The Realist*, I (June, 1929), pp. 142-59, and by D. G. James in *Scepticism and Poetry*, 1937, pp. 164-9, but defended by Edith Batho, *The Later Wordsworth*, Cambridge, 1933, pp. 28-32.

<sup>16</sup> Letter to Seymour Tremenheere of December 16, 1845.

<sup>17</sup> See letter to Mrs. Clarkson of December, 1814, and Crabb Robinson's Diary for January 27, 1811, and January 3, 1815.

<sup>18</sup> See his two letters of December, 1828, to H. J. Rose. He discusses education in his letters to Daniel Stuart of September 7, 1817; to Lord Lonsdale of June, 1825; to Christopher Wordsworth of March 15, 1829, and April 27,

1830; to Basil Montagu of 1831; to Seymour Tremenhare of December 16, 1845; and to Charles Wordsworth of March 12, 1846

<sup>19</sup> See *Memoirs*, I, 10, quoted p. 379 above

<sup>20</sup> See Chapter VII and 358-63 n; II, 203-32 n; III, 153-7 n; VIII, 296-301 n; XII, A 123-37. Wordsworth's anti-rationalism also appears in his faith in the instincts of the mother and the child (see 246-93 n.) and in his distrust of an educational system which disregards these instincts and considers chiefly 'the acquisition of learning and the training of the intellect.

<sup>21</sup> "Wordsworth's 'Prelude,'" *Fallodon Papers*, Boston, 1926, pp. 158-9.

<sup>22</sup> *Die Menschenerziehung, Friedrich Frobel's gesammelte pädagogische Schriften*, herausgegeben von Dr. Wichard Lange, erste Abtheilung, zweiter Band, Berlin, 1863, p. 22. The passage is thus translated by W. N. Hailmann (*The Education of Man*, New York, 1893, p. 30).

*The child, the boy, man, indeed, should know no other endeavor but to be at every stage of development wholly what this stage calls for. Then will each successive stage spring like a new shoot from a healthy bud; and, at each successive stage, he will with the same endeavor again accomplish the requirements of this stage: for only the adequate development of man at each preceding stage can effect and bring about adequate development at each succeeding later stage*

<sup>23</sup> Letter to a Friend, 1806 (*Memoirs*, II, 168-70; *Letters, the Middle Years*, ed de Selincourt, Oxford, 1937, I, 103-4).

<sup>24</sup> H. C. Robinson's letter to Mrs Clarkson of May 7, 1808, quoted in *Cole-ridge's Shakespearean Criticism*, ed T. M. Raysor, Cambridge, Mass., 1930, II, 13.

<sup>25</sup> Raysor, II, 110, cf. also II, 293, the seventh lecture at Bristol, 1813-14

<sup>26</sup> Letter to William Cole, 2 March, 1802, quoted in C. Kegan Paul's *William Godwin*, 1876, II, 119.

<sup>27</sup> "Wordsworth's 'Prelude,'" *Fallodon Papers*, p. 161.

<sup>28</sup> De Quincey, *Literary Reminiscences*, Boston, 1851, I, 308-9; not in Masson.

<sup>29</sup> *Immortality Ode*, 126.

<sup>30</sup> *Letters of the Wordsworth Family*, ed. Knight, Boston, 1907, III, 122.

<sup>31</sup> Yet it should not be forgotten that few of the subjects he considered when planning an important long poem (see I, 166-233) were close to every-day life.

## BOOK VI

THIS book deals briefly with Wordsworth's second and third years at the University as well as with the vacation that came between them, and describes at much greater length, with freshness and contagious delight, the trip through France and Switzerland undertaken in the last summer vacation. That is, it covers the period between October, 1788, and October, 1790, when the poet was eighteen to twenty years of age. Eighty-two lines are given over to Coleridge and fifty-three to the praise of mathematics. The greater part of VI seems to have been composed between the middle of March and the middle of April, 1804, but lines 621-40 were written in 1799, presumably (like many of the other best passages in the poem) at Goslar. There is no early manuscript of any part of this book.

1-3. A marked improvement over the earlier texts.

9-19. That is, like most young men, Wordsworth was glad to get back to the University.

11. Much of the beauty of the lake region in autumn is due to the color of the withering fern.

13-16. See ii. 276-81 n. Professor de Selincourt remarks,<sup>1</sup> "It is not to the maids of *Hawkshead* [in Lancashire] that he bids adieu but to the 'frank-hearted maids of Cumberland,' i. e. of Penrith, where Mary lived."

13. *calmer . . . louder*: Than in summer. The lakes are unusually still and unruffled in autumn and the streams, owing to the rains, are louder than they have been for some months. Lines 11-13 are as accurate as they are beautiful.

A 19-20. Pedestrian lines wisely omitted.

20-22. A 20-25 is more detailed. The change that came over Wordsworth was probably due to the rapid development that he seems to have undergone during the preceding summer when his interest in his fellow-men had been quickened, when he had, apparently for the first time, been strongly attracted by girls of his own age, and when several notable experiences had

befallen him: his first walk around the lake, his meeting with the discharged soldier, and his dedication.

24. Skilfully condensed from two lines in A. Wordsworth is echoing Bacon's essay "Of Studies": "Some *Bookes* are to be Tasted, Others to be Swallowed, and Some Few to be Chewed and Digested." A 28 has "tasted." For Wordsworth's reading, see iii. A 524-30 n.

A 31-8. Omitted later as diffuse and unnecessary.

32-3. *over-love Of freedom*: A adds "planted in me from the very first." It is hardly necessary to dwell on Wordsworth's passion for political freedom for all men: Spaniards, French, and Negroes, as well as Englishmen. His craving for full personal liberty was no less deep-seated and stubborn,—a close cousin to his wilfulness (see iii. 355 n.), his self-confidence (see i. A 364 n.), his love of wandering and wanderers (see vi. 252 n.), and more distantly related to his "keen sympathy with vigorous action even at times when it approached to lawlessness."<sup>2</sup> According to Augustine Birrell:

The late Lord Chief Justice Coleridge used to tell how his father . . . Judge of Assize [was taken by Wordsworth] across the hillsides, and when their path was arrested, as it frequently was, by one of those low unmortared stone walls which marked the boundaries of the sheep-feeding lands, out went one of the poet's huge feet, and down tumbled enough of the wall to enable the pair of trespassers to pursue their walk. The Judge of Assize, as he followed the poet, could sometimes hardly restrain symptoms of uneasiness, nor was he completely reassured when his companion quietly remarked, "There is no occasion to be surprised. You must know by this time that when you scratch me you will find a sansculotte."<sup>3</sup>

To no slight extent this over-love of freedom was due to the independence which characterized the dalesmen among whom he grew up and to the example of their unshackled lives, which appealed strongly to him (see viii. 104-5, 251-6, *Recluse*, i. i. 358-83). Throughout his eighty years he enjoyed remarkable freedom from set times and tasks. The Hawkshead system permitted unusual and that at Cambridge considerable independence, so that when he left the university, "used" as he had been "in magisterial liberty to rove" (iii. 371-2), he was loath to shoulder a harness; even after several years of wandering he

preferred poverty to a regular occupation. It was because he was to himself a guide that he had the resolution to begin a new kind of poetry and to preserve in it despite the neglect and scorn of his contemporaries. See also ii. 72, 76-7; iii. 101-3; v. 223-363 and notes; vi. 326-8, 776-8; vii. 64; viii. 328-9; xiv. 130-2, 247-9, 329-35; *Excursion*, iii. 918-43; vii. 297-433; "Ode to Duty," 25-31; "Liberty" ("Those breathing Tokens," especially 30-4); Autobiographical Memoranda (*Memoirs*, i, 10 [Grosart, iii, 220], "my earliest days at school . . . were very happy ones, chiefly because I was left at liberty . . . to read whatever books I liked"). Note the importance he attaches to the child's freedom in his discussion of education (Book v).

A 46. *indolence*: Though not mentioned in the final text, this was perhaps largely responsible. Cf. "that majestic indolence so dear To native man" (viii. 255-6). This is not the same thing as the "holy indolence" and "most wise passiveness" of de S., 548 (cf. "Expostulation and Reply" and "To my Sister"), although the two are connected. See also i. 250-4, 620-5; iii. 236, A 254; vi. 179-82; vii. 71-2, A 20; xi. 325-7; and Dorothy's letter to Miss Pollard of June 26, 1791—"William . . . lost the chance, indeed the certainty of a fellowship by not combating his inclinations"—and Wordsworth's letters to Mathews of November 23, 1791, February 17, 1794, June 17 and August 13, 1791—"I am doomed to be an idler through my whole life"; "I have done nothing and still continue to do nothing"; "sometimes [in London] . . . I lay in almost motionless indolence"; "when in Town I did *little*, and since I came here I have done nothing,"—and to Jerdan in later life—"There is an obstacle in the way of my ever producing anything of this kind, viz. idleness."<sup>4</sup> "Disobedience toward friends And kindred" (28-9) did not deter him from the trip to Switzerland.<sup>5</sup> Lines 25-35 show that Wordsworth's high opinion of himself did not interfere with keen self-analysis and sound self-criticism.

35-41. Cf. 314-16; i. 344-50; iii. 482-96; and pp. 282-3 above.

35-7. Nineteen successive monosyllables. Cf. ii. 41-5 n.

39. *intuitive truths*: See Chapter vii.

40. *keen research*: Probably hard thinking, including psychological analysis.

41. See 505 n.

48-9. It is hard to realize that the author of *The Prelude* was only thirty-four years old, that he was indeed not yet thirty when he wrote many of the loftiest parts of it. But Wordsworth, though he matured late, aged early.

51-2. Apparently Wordsworth first substituted "gladdened" for the prosaic "was in" of A 64, and, as this necessitated the removal of "gladness" in the previous line, he put "radiance" in its place. Later "radiance" suggested the beautiful figure of the sun and the dew.

52-7. See iv. 307-38 n.

57-63. Cf. iii. 268-77.

61. The meaning is, "and the men seemed."

A 77-9. In the final text there is no mention of delight in imagery (see 158-60 n.), and the vigorous and important assertion that love and enjoyment were his chief business is rendered innocuous. With this last compare xii. A 234-8, "I felt, and nothing else" (which likewise is omitted from the final text), and de S., lx and 594. Since imagery is mentioned, since poetic composition is the subject of the immediately preceding lines, and is referred to in those that immediately follow (87-94), and since the next paragraph deals with reading, lines A 77-94 must refer only to literature, to the joys of writing and reading verse.

76-85. Cf. "Yew Trees."

86. *Foot-bound*: Cf. "root-bound" (*Comus*, 662), of Daphne turned into a tree.

87-94. See vii. 77-84 n.

91-2. The tree suggested to him something very unlike itself (see xiii. 312-49 n.), apparently the composition of an epic or romance similar to those he considered before beginning *The Prelude* (see i. 166-220). In *The Recluse*, I. i. 749-50, he says that he had long hoped to write an epic.

95-114. See iii. A 524-30 n.

97. *taste*: In A 116 "outward taste," an awkward phrase which presumably refers (by contrast to "inner knowledge" of A 113) to what would, from outward manifestations and superficial appearances, seem to be his taste. Wordsworth apparently does not mean (note 99-100) that he admired one

thing and liked another,<sup>6</sup> but that "the vague reading of a truant youth," (95) the lazy reading in trivial books (iii. 254), the "casual feast" at which he usually laid himself down when he did not "peep about for vagrant fruit" (iii. A 524-30) was very different from that which satisfied his deeper nature. He would hardly speak of his perusal of the artificial and elaborate poetry of the eighteenth century (de S., 534) as "vague" and "truant" but might very properly apply these terms to his desultory reading at the University (which included such poetry but was in the main more trivial) as he had described it in iii. A 524-30—"truant" occurs in both places. He may well have dropped the earlier passage because he found that he had said the same thing later.

A 113-14 are wordy, dull, and unnecessary, but "in depth And delicacy" (A 114-15) might well have been kept.

100-6. "Nature" is presumably the "living Nature" of A 119, i. e. (as in v. 167, 588, and *Excursion*, ix. 513) external nature. Line 106 makes clear that Wordsworth means that he was better able to judge not merely descriptive poetry but, what is much more dubious, of the truth, accuracy, and sincerity of all poetry. See ii. 423-51, xiii. 19-47, and pp. 106-8 above.

✓ A comment in the "Essay, supplementary to the Preface" (Oxf. W., p. 950) may perhaps illustrate his meaning: "Having had the good fortune to be born and reared in a mountainous country, from my very childhood I have felt the falsehood that pervades the volumes imposed upon the world under the name of Ossian.") Although 100-1 are more sonorous and philosophical than A 118-20, those who are skeptical as to the young Wordsworth's having "scanned, Not heedlessly, the laws . . . Of Nature" will feel that the earlier version is closer to the poet's original thought and to the facts. "A nature" (A 132), a second nature, the equivalent of an "inherent and innate disposition or character" (NED). See iii. 557 n.

109-14. See Wordsworth's letters to Landor of September 3, 1821, and of April 20, 1822.

✓ 115-67. This and Wordsworth's other references to mathematics (iii. 58-63; v. 65-161; xi. 321-33; and *Excursion*, i. 250-79) form an impressive tribute. In v. 149-61 he affirms that if the world were to be destroyed he should leave others to care

for whatever the heart holds dear and should endeavor to save poetry and mathematics. To William Rowan Hamilton, the eminent mathematician, he wrote, July 24, 1829, that if Hamilton spent much time writing verse it would divert him "from subjects of infinitely greater importance." Such utterances seem strangely inconsistent with the confession that, in a university where mathematics held a leading place, he had "advanced . . . No farther than the threshold" (117-9) and with Dorothy's remarks (quoted, de S., 533) that he lost a fellowship through his "dislike to studies so dry as many parts of Mathematics" and that he "never opens a mathematical book." Yet he wrote Hamilton on February 8, 1833: "Your lecture . . . makes me regret—as I have had a thousand occasions of doing—that I did not apply to mathematics in my youth." The truth seems to be that it was the *idea* of geometry, the universality and immutability of its laws, rather than any knowledge of the subject that appealed to him, just as the idea of the Church of England did in spite of the infrequency of his attendance on its services (see viii. 292 n.). Note "ignorance Which even was cherish'd" (A 142-3), a form of anti-intellectualism similar to that expressed in viii. A 577-82.

115-28. A 135-49 is wordy and prosaic and the latter part of it obscure. In the later text, 115-19 remain pedestrian and 124-6 become self-conscious and "literary," but 127-8 are a notable addition. Miss Edith Batho suggests<sup>7</sup> that these lines and those on Newton (iii. 58-63), which were written about the same time, may have been influenced by Wordsworth's admiration for the astronomer and mathematician, W. R. Hamilton, whom he came to know in 1827.

✓129-41. Cf. iii. A 116-18 and *Excursion*, iv. 1145-7:

ebb and flow, and ever-during power;  
And central peace, subsisting at the heart  
Of endless agitation.

131. An illustration of Wordsworth's craving for "enduring things" (cf. i. 409 n.).

✓132. *paramount belief*: "And I also drew a strong belief that behind all phenomena was a supreme mind." In A 153 the meaning is, "I drew a sense of a supreme endowment



[situated] in the mind." This endowment is the power to understand and use mathematical laws, which are not limited by time or place.

135. "Which" suggests an impersonal, living force rather than a personal God. The religious feeling seems stronger in the more direct early text.

137-8. It was this aspect of mathematics rather than the permanence stressed in 131 that attracted Wordsworth in 1795 (see xi. 330-3). Perhaps 138 is the basis of De Quincey's assertion: "The secret of this admiration for geometry lay in the antagonism between this world of bodiless abstraction and the world of passion."<sup>8</sup>

142-54. Taken from *An Authentic Narrative of Some Remarkable and Interesting Particulars in the Life of \*\*\** (1764) by John Newton, the friend of the poet Cowper. Wordsworth may have been drawn to the book, which went through at least six editions besides being reprinted several times in its author's collected works, by his interest in the literature of travel (see iii. 433-44n.). In the fifth of the letters that make up the *Authentic Narrative*, Newton tells of the cruelty he suffered at the hands of his master, a slave-trader on an island near the African coast, and then adds:

One thing, though strange, is most true. *Though destitute of food and clothing, depressed to a degree beyond common wretchedness, I could sometimes collect my mind to mathematical studies. I had bought Barrow's Euclid at Plymouth; it was the only volume I brought on shore; it was always with me, and I used to take it to remote corners of the island by the sea-side, and draw my diagrams with a long stick upon the sand. Thus I often beguiled my sorrows, and almost forgot my feeling;—and thus, without any other assistance, I made myself in a good measure master of the first six books of Euclid.*<sup>9</sup>

Since some of Wordsworth's poems are paraphrases of passages in his sister's diary it may be that in the present instance he followed an extract she had made from Newton without realizing that it was a verbatim copy not a summary. Two slight mistakes suggest some such procedure: Newton had no "fellow Sufferers" and he was not shipwrecked, although the letter preceding the one from which Wordsworth borrowed ends with the remark, "I landed upon the island of Benanoes

with little more than the cloaths upon my back, as if I had escaped shipwreck." These mistakes would hardly have been made by one who had the book before him but they might easily occur if a person were depending on his memory and a brief quotation. And Wordsworth would hardly have taken some seven and a half lines of *The Prelude* almost word for word from another work, consciously and without acknowledgments.

146. *wont*: A verb in the third person singular. Cf. Wordsworth's "Cuckoo at Laverna," 60, "With beast and bird . . . He wont to hold companionship." Perhaps influenced by Milton's usage, "he wont at Heaven's high council-table To sit the midst of Trinal Unity" ("Nativity," 10-11); cf. *Paradise Lost*, v. 123, vi. 93.

153-4. The Wanderer was in his youth similarly helped by mathematics (*Excursion*, i. 252-7).

154-6. More accurate than A but most awkwardly expressed.

158-60. Escape into the abstract from the effect on the imagination of a vivid sense of the concrete. In a striking passage that is probably autobiographical the Wanderer is pictured as

o'erpowered  
By Nature; by the turbulence subdued  
Of his own mind; by mystery and hope,  
And the first virgin passion of a soul  
Communing with the glorious universe.

(*Excursion*, i. 282-6)

The agitation that images cause in the mind is referred to in viii. 113-15, and in iii. 158-69 Wordsworth says that his eye, ever "looking for the shades of difference" (iii. A 158), "could find no surface where its power might sleep." His remarks on the spurious imagery of Ossian and on the absence of new images of external nature in neo-classic verse in the "Essay, supplementary to the Preface" (*Oxf. W.*, pp. 948, 950), together with his emphasis on "clear thoughts, lively images, and strong feelings" in the preface to *The Excursion* show how much his mind was occupied with the subject. See also i. 154-5; iv. 113 n., 256-70 n., 358 n.; v. 579-83; vi. A 78-9; and "Stanzas, Castle of Indolence," 65. Writing to a friend in

1806 about a girl's education he urged "leaving her at liberty to luxuriate in such feelings and images as will feed her mind in silent pleasure" (*Memors*, II, 169). The amount and the excellence of the imagery in Wordsworth's poetry has not been generally appreciated.

162. For Wordsworth's emphasis on unity and on the synthesizing power of the imagination, see ii. 221 n. and pp. 212-15, 319 above.

✓ 171-8. Youth has ever loved "moods melancholy" but in the later eighteenth century such love was fed by the vogue of the literature of gloom, which strongly influenced Wordsworth's early verse.<sup>10</sup> He refers to his indulgence in these moods again in 364-7, 551-6 (see also xi. A 868-70); in *The Recluse*, I. 1. 52-5:

through such damp and gloom  
Of the gay mind, as oftentimes splenetic youth  
Mistakes for sorrow darting beams of light  
That no self-cherished sadness could withstand;

in the first "Ode to Lycoris," 19-36 (in youth, through excess of happiness, we affect sad fancies); and in "Presentiments," 7-9:

The tear whose source I could not guess,  
The deep sigh that seemed fatherless,  
Were mine in early days.

The melancholy of *The Vale of Esthwaite, An Evening Walk* (1793), 27-52, 241-300, 361-2, 379-88, 407-22, and of *Descriptive Sketches* (1793), 1-47, 164-6, 192-200, 590-679, 810-13 was doubtless in part real, in part literary, and in part the "luxurious gloom of choice." See 342-778 n. For Wordsworth's temperamental melancholy see de S., 587-8; for the part it plays in his poetry and the marked increase of it in 1805 see xiv. 293-6 n. One who saw him at the theatre in 1836 wrote:

I always thought that Wordsworth's face had much of sadness in its expression, and this struck me very forcibly on the night in question. He looked more like a man borne down by some heavy grief than a profound thinker. . . . Mrs. Sigourney . . . said that she had remarked the same "sad look" even when surrounded by his own family.<sup>11</sup>

See also xi. 276 n., A 866-73 n. and pp. 198-200 above.

179-84. See A 46 n.; iii. 249-58. Wordsworth's "Stanzas Written in Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*" was composed in May, 1802.

184-9. Cf. iii. 345-53, 371-381, 496-505.

190-236. There is much that is uncertain about this vacation. Professor de Selincourt shows in an important supplementary note that Wordsworth is here "blending in one picture events which took place during three years" (i. e. the summers of 1787, 1788, 1789), that he probably visited Dorothy at Forncett in Norfolk (some sixty miles east of Cambridge) at the beginning of the vacation, and later took walks with his future wife about Penrith. Dovedale, which lies near Buxton somewhat more than half way between Birmingham and Manchester and a little to the east, and the Yorkshire valleys would not be far out of his way to Penrith. He may have visited the one on his outward and the other on his return journey. We do not know which of the Yorkshire dales he "pried into" (Wharfedale, Wensleydale, Swaledale, and Teesdale are the best known), whether he went alone, and if not who was his companion, whether he visited Hawkshead, and whether this was "the blessed time of early love" for Mary Hutchinson (see xii. A 318 and the de S. note to xi. A 323). *The White Doe* and "The Force of Prayer," which deal with Wharfedale, but were not begun until 1807, may owe something to this summer vacation.

192. *That streamlet*: The Dove, which is associated with Izaak Walton and Charles Cotton. Dovedale, a narrow ravine bordered by limestone rocks in fantastic shapes, is less than three miles long.

204. *Emont*: The Eamont River, the outlet of Ullswater, which flows past Brougham Castle a mile or two south of Penrith, and empties into the Eden.

226-7. The awkward expression "outside look" is used for the sake of contrast with "under-countenance" (on which see de S., 600).

244-7. These ringing lines ignore the facts that the Wordsworths as well as Coleridge had suffered much "grief . . . languor . . . dejection . . ." on account of the latter's ill health and "absence."

251. *Etesian*: "The distinctive epithet of certain winds in the region of the Mediterranean, blowing from the NW. for about 40 days annually in the summer" (*NED*).

252. *wanderer*: Wordsworth's love of wandering is seen in the way he chose to spend his last two long vacations, in the vagrancy of the immediately ensuing years, and in the restlessness which frequently came upon him in later life. From the time of his first tramp across France until he settled at Grasmere (1790-99) he was seldom long in one place; and although poverty, poetry, and family cares precluded many long trips thereafter it is amazing how many short excursions he made. "Wandering" he declared to be his "passion" as books were Southey's, and he remarked that had he been born in humble circumstances he should probably, like the chief character of his longest poem, have become a pedlar. Indeed he and his friend Mathews had for a time some idea of becoming vagrants, and, according to his sister, he went to Orleans to qualify himself to become the "travelling companion to some young gentleman."<sup>12</sup> Even a minstrel "could not draw . . . more earnest bliss From that eventful and way-faring life" than Wordsworth had derived from tramping (*de S.*, 549); he referred to a dreary old age as a time when "wandering [may] seem but folly" ("Yarrow Unvisited," 58) but was spared such a fate by Sir George Beaumont, who knew his tastes and left him an annuity of £100 "to defray the expenses of a yearly tour." "I love a public road," he wrote,

such object hath had power  
O'er my imagination since the dawn  
Of childhood, when its disappearing line . . .  
Was like a guide into eternity. . .  
Even something of the grandeur which invests  
The Mariner who sails the roaring sea  
Through storm and darkness early in my mind  
Surrounded, too, the Wanderers of the Earth.

(xiii. A 145-56, cf. iv. A 363-99)

These wanderers frequently appear in his poetry: minstrels, beggars, "itinerants," pilgrims, gipsies, leech-gatherers—and as a rule are shown in a favorable light. Undoubtedly Wordsworth's independence, his passion for freedom and for the out-

of-doors, and his relative indifference to sophistication and comfort had much to do with this; but his early love of adventure, which later took the form of interest in books of travel and exploration (see iii. 433-44 n.)—accounts of wandering, be it observed,—also entered in. See also his note to *The Excursion*, i. 341.)

A 263. Concerning the good opinion of himself Wordsworth expressed in this line, in 261-4 and 310-14, see i. A 364 n. v. 254-6. Similar to ii. 451-4; "the same discipline" recalls "The self-same bourne" (ii. 454): self-discipline through meditation and communion with nature (ii. 460-4) leading to the development of the qualities enumerated in 262-4. "Different" (A 265) is clearer than "several" (255).

281-6, 308-14. Coleridge probably told Wordsworth what he confessed in a letter to his brother George, of February 23, 1794,<sup>13</sup> regarding his indolence and excesses at Cambridge.

291-4. An excellent figure.

v. 294-305. J. W. Beach says of these lines, "Wordsworth considers that he [Coleridge] has been led astray by the *verbalism* of scholastic and 'platonic' speculation, to the point of substituting metaphysical notions for actual things."<sup>14</sup> But Wordsworth refers to Coleridge the boy and is not so much criticizing him as lamenting that he was deprived of the corrective derived from "Nature's living images."

298. *forms*: Apparently the object not of "Among" but, like "learning . . . strength . . . toils," of "thought" (294).

299. *shaped out*: Probably a past participle dependent on "forms" (perhaps on "pageantry") although the construction, going back to 296, might be, "Of everything that thy strength, thy speculations, etc. shaped out."

300. *words for things*: i. e., from books, discussions, and abstract reasonings instead of from "Nature's living images."

A 322, A 327, A 334-7. Omitted from the final text. A 322 and "with an easier mind" of A 334 are of interest; A 335-7 are dull, unnecessary, and (like all creaking of machinery) inartistic.

323. See xiv. 3 n. Wordsworth seems to have been warmly attached to Jones, writing to him in the dedicatory letter prefixed to *Descriptive Sketches*, "of the high place you hold in

my esteem" and "in inscribing this little work to you I consult my heart"; some forty years later, in the final revision of *The Prelude*, he referred to him as "a dear companion" (x. 497); and remarked about the same time in a letter, "Thought of dear Jones at Cervige."<sup>15</sup> He "nourished the pleasing expectation of seeing Jones upon the banks of Loire,"<sup>16</sup> and, poor as he was, he seems to have entertained his friend at Dove Cottage in September, 1800, as soon as he had a house of his own. Jones is described in "A Character" as "an odd . . . a kind happy creature" who "would at once run away with your heart"; in a note added after his death to the sonnet, "Jones! as from Calais," his parsonage is pointed out as the subject of another sonnet, "Where holy ground begins," and he is termed "one of my earliest and dearest friends." "Our long friendship," Wordsworth adds, "was never subject to a moment's interruption." Wordsworth visited his friend in 1791 and 1793, and in 1824 made a trip through part of Wales with him. Of this "delightful ramble" he wrote:

Jones was the best of companions, being master of the language, very extensively known in the Country, a most affectionate Man, and, I verily believe, the best-tempered Creature imaginable; to me, who am apt to be irritable in travelling, an inestimable qualification.<sup>17</sup>

Unfortunately only one of Dorothy's and five of her brother's letters to him have been preserved and these are all late, the last having been written the year of Jones's death. There are about twenty references to him in the letters of Dorothy and William to other persons.

323-5. Wordsworth's desire to eliminate inessential and merely personal details (note especially the first three lines of the A<sup>2</sup>C variant of A 339-45) has carried him too far, since he fails to make immediately clear that his friend was "A Fellow Student" (A 339), and that they went on foot. Similarly, the explanation "we then Were near the close of our Novitiate" of A<sup>2</sup>C and (approximately) of B<sup>2</sup> helps to clarify 326-32.

326-32. In English universities much of the best work is done during the vacations, which occupy nearly half the year. As Wordsworth seems to have studied little in the two preceding long vacations it was the more important, if he hoped to

distinguish himself in the final examinations of the following winter, that he spend the summer in work. Presumably his relatives were chiefly concerned in his securing a fellowship in order that he might be "settled" and provided for financially.<sup>18</sup> In a letter to his sister of September 6 to 16, 1790, Wordsworth wrote that he did not call upon his elder brother when he was in London "because he, as many of our friends at Cambridge did, would look upon our scheme as mad and impracticable." With 326-8 cf. iii. 64-75, 500-5; with 329-32 cf. iii. A 72-8. Wordsworth's independence—wilfulness, if one prefers,—is shown in his taking the trip at this time; yet here at least the instincts in which he came to have firm faith guided him wisely. Forty years later his companion looked back to the journey "as the golden and sunny spot in his life,"<sup>19</sup> a feeling that the poet apparently shared. Furthermore, it was chiefly because of this trip that France lured him a second time and started the ferment which, directly or indirectly, made him a great poet.

✓ 333-41. Wordsworth distinguishes two motives for the journey: love of nature, the chief, which urged him to Switzerland to see the Alps; and interest in man, in political and social movements, which urged him to France bright with the dawn of a new era. It is clear from 766-78, viii. 340-56, and ix. 67-92 that the second motive was not strong and it may have amounted to little more than curiosity. But iv. 231-55 and viii. 98-529 should not be forgotten. Wordsworth's attitude towards nature at this time is described in xii. 180-92 (the corresponding passage in A, 230-42, is better). ✓

334. *mighty forms*: The forms of mountains, either those of the lake district or of the Alps.

335. *irregular hopes*: Hopes to spend the summer not in the "regular" way, i. e. in study, but in visiting the Alps.

339-44. A 352 is improved in the final text, which wisely omits A 355 and adds 342-4.

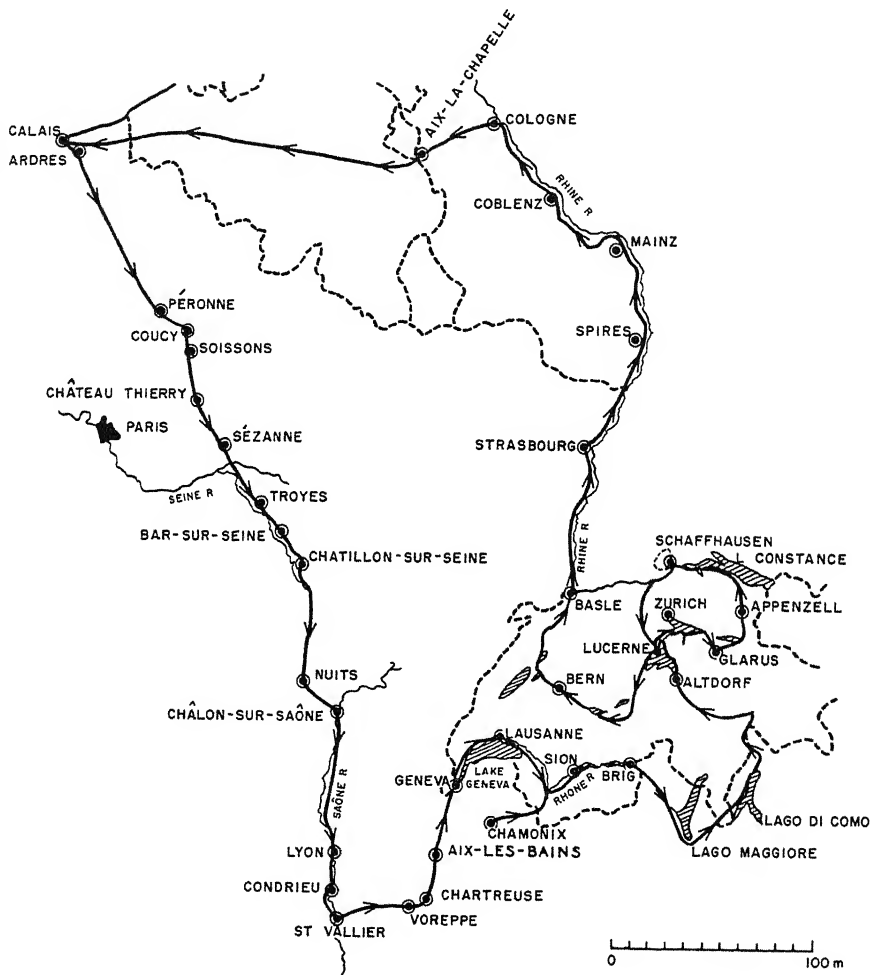
✓ 342-778. Mr. Harper says of Wordsworth's interests as revealed by this trip, "the enjoyment of natural beauty was apparently his one absorbing passion" since he passed "within a day's march of Amiens and Rheims . . . and within fifty miles of Paris" without turning aside to visit any of them (I, 90).



But the two young men probably thought they had neither the time nor the money for Paris and perhaps not for Amiens and Rheims. Doubtless they had no great interest in architecture but it would not be strange if they were ignorant of the greatness of French cathedrals and unaware of the importance of those in Amiens and Rheims—information on such subjects was far less common, less easily available, then than it is now. And it is easy to forget that they were only boys. For one of his years, Wordsworth reveals considerable interest in the brotherhood of man as well as in the life of the French people and especially in their enthusiasm for the new order.

For the differences between this account of the journey and those in the letter to Dorothy and in *Descriptive Sketches*, see Garrod, chapter II; de S., 538-9; Janette Harrington, *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, XLIV (December, 1929), 1144-58; and E. N. Hooker, *ibid.*, XLV (June, 1930), 619-23. (Harper (I, 99) remarks that while the *Descriptive Sketches* is a record of "mere sensations chiefly," *The Prelude* is one "of imagination brooding over incidents of life and forms of outward beauty." Not all this brooding, it should be observed, is subsequent to the composition of the *Descriptive Sketches*. The great passage beginning "The immeasurable height Of woods" and ending "first, and last, and midst, and without end" purports to tell us what the young traveller felt at the time, and is quite in accord with the Kesswil letter to Dorothy: "Among the more awful scenes of the Alps, I had not a thought of man, or a single created being; my whole soul was turned to him who produced the terrible majesty before me." That Wordsworth had known such feelings, such broodings of the imagination, years before this is clear from the first, second, and twelfth books of *The Prelude*.) But in 1791-2 he was unable to express them—if, indeed, it had ever occurred to him to do so. In *The Prelude* he does not paint pictures, as he does in *Descriptive Sketches*, but shows the impact on his mind of the dawn of French liberty and of natural beauty with its suggestions of the infinite. Unquestionably the later account is fresher and more true. As to the melancholy of the earlier poem, it should be observed that both in the Kesswil letter<sup>20</sup> and in *The Prelude* (557-61, 617-19; note also 645-8) he men-





tions the moods of genuine sadness that at times oppressed him; that twice in his account of the trip (364-7, 551-6) and once in his description of his previous winter (171-8, see note) he refers to "dejection taken up for pleasure's sake"; and that, as Mr. Hooker points out (*op. cit.*, 620), he would not be likely to dwell upon his melancholy in a letter to a beloved sister who must have been anxious about his welfare.<sup>21</sup>

349-59. The visit to Arras, not mentioned here, is described in x. 490-510.

364-7. See 171-8 n., 342-778 n.

376, 378. *Saone . . . Rhone*: At the end of the second week after leaving Calais they took at Châlon a boat on the Saône for Lyons, where the Saône joins the Rhone, and then continued southward by boat on the Rhone to a point nearly opposite the Grande Chartreuse, which was apparently their southern objective. From this point they worked east, north, and again east to Lausanne.

The accompanying maps I owe to the kindness of Claude Jones, one of my former students, who traced them from maps in the *London Times Atlas*. The information as to Wordsworth's movements was derived from the itinerary in one of his early note books, as published in the *Memoirs*, I, 56-7 n. I reprint this with additions from the fuller transcription given in *P. W.*, *Youth*, pp. 325-6, and with corrections derived from a study of maps. I have not preserved the poet's spelling.

July

10. Shuter's Hill
11. Canterbury
12. Dover
13. Calais
14. Ardres
15. Lillers
16. Arras
17. Péronne
18. Village near Couci
19. Soissons
20. Château Thierry
21. Sézanne
22. Village near Troyes
23. Bar le Duc [Bar sur Seine]
24. Chatillon sur Seine
25. Town in a hole
26. Nuits

27. Châlons [Châlon-sur-Saône]

28. Châlons [Châlon-sur-Saône]

29. On the Saône

30. Lyons

31. Condrieu

Aug

1. Moreau
2. Voreppe
3. Village near Chartreuse
4. Chartreuse
5. Chartreuse
6. Aix
7. Town in Savoy
8. French town on Lake of Geneva
9. Lausanne
10. Villeneuve
11. St. Maurice in the Valais

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Aug.                                     | 4 Village on the road to Appenzell             |
| 12. Chamonix                             | 5. Appenzell                                   |
| 13. Chamonix                             | 6 Kesswil, on Lake of Constance                |
| 14. Martigny                             | 7 On the Rhine                                 |
| 15. Village beyond Sion                  | 8. On the Rhine                                |
| 16. Brig                                 | 9 On road to Lucerne                           |
| 17. Spital on Alps                       | 10 Lucerne                                     |
| 18. Mergozzo                             | 11. Sachslen                                   |
| 19. Village beyond Lago Maggiore         | 12. Village on the Aar                         |
| 20. Village on Lago di Como              | 13 Grindelwald                                 |
| 21 Village beyond Gravedona              | 14. Lauterbrunnen                              |
| 22 Jones at Chiavenna; W. W. at Samolaco | 15. Village three leagues from Berne           |
| 23. Sovazza                              | 16. Avenches                                   |
| 24 Splugen                               | 17. Village in the valley of [?Truvers]        |
| 25 Flems                                 | 18 Village in the valley of St. Pierre         |
| 26 Disentis                              | 19. Village beyond Pierre Pertuis              |
| 27. Village on the Reuss                 | 20. Village four leagues from Basle            |
| 28. Fluelen                              | 21. Basle                                      |
| 29. Lucerne                              | 22 Town six leagues from Strasbourg            |
| 30. Village on Lake of Zurich            | 23. Spires [Speyer]                            |
| 31. Einsiedeln                           | 24 Village on Rhine                            |
|  | 26. Mentz [Mainz]                              |
| Sept                                     | 27. Village on Rhine, two leagues from Coblenz |
| 1. Glarus                                | 28. Cologne                                    |
| 2 Glarus                                 | 29. Village three leagues from Aix-la-Chapelle |
| 3 Village beyond Lake of Wal-lenstadt    |  |

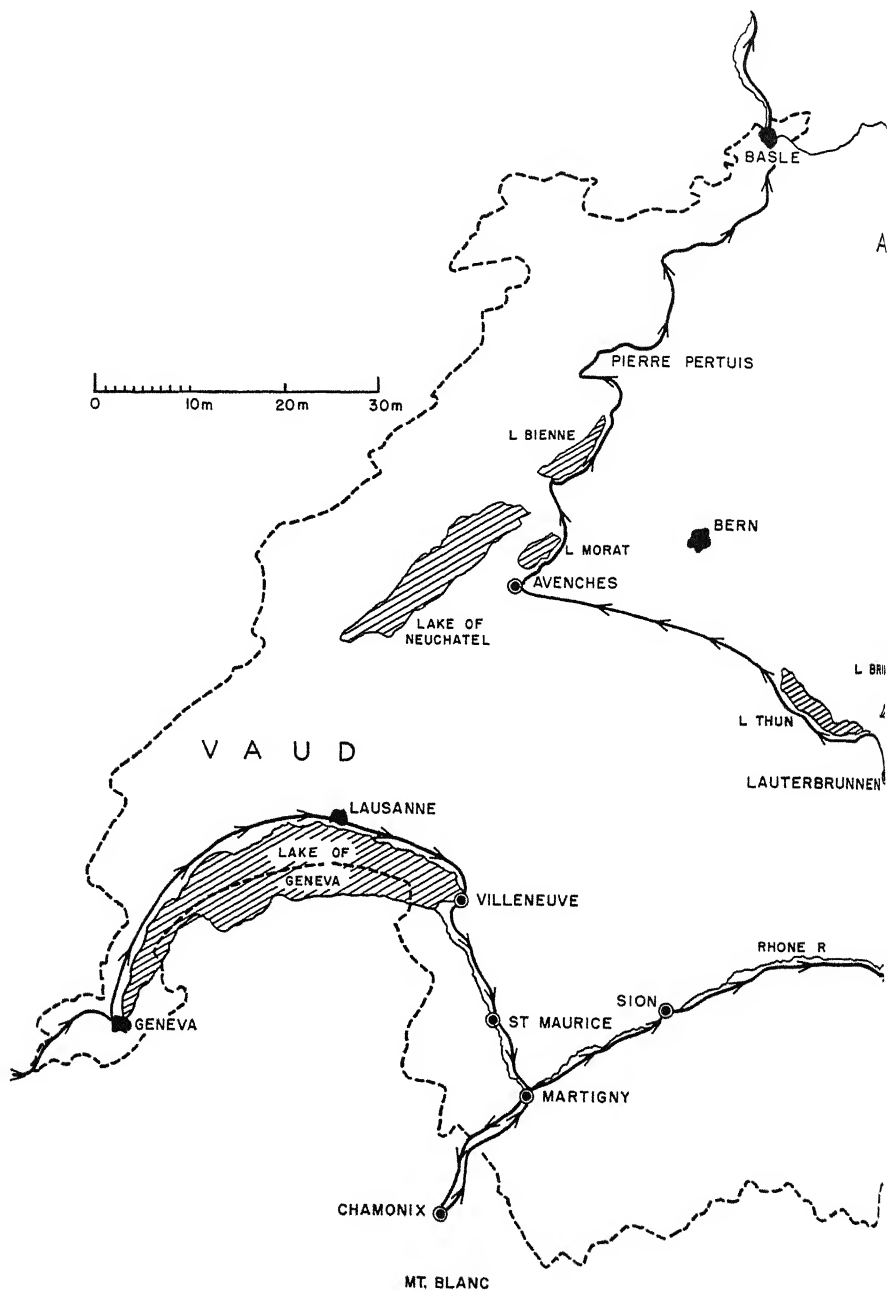
No further memoranda The pedestrians bought a boat at Basle, and therein floated down the Rhine as far as Cologne, having intended so to travel to Ostend, but they returned by Calais (*Memoirs*, i, 57 n.).

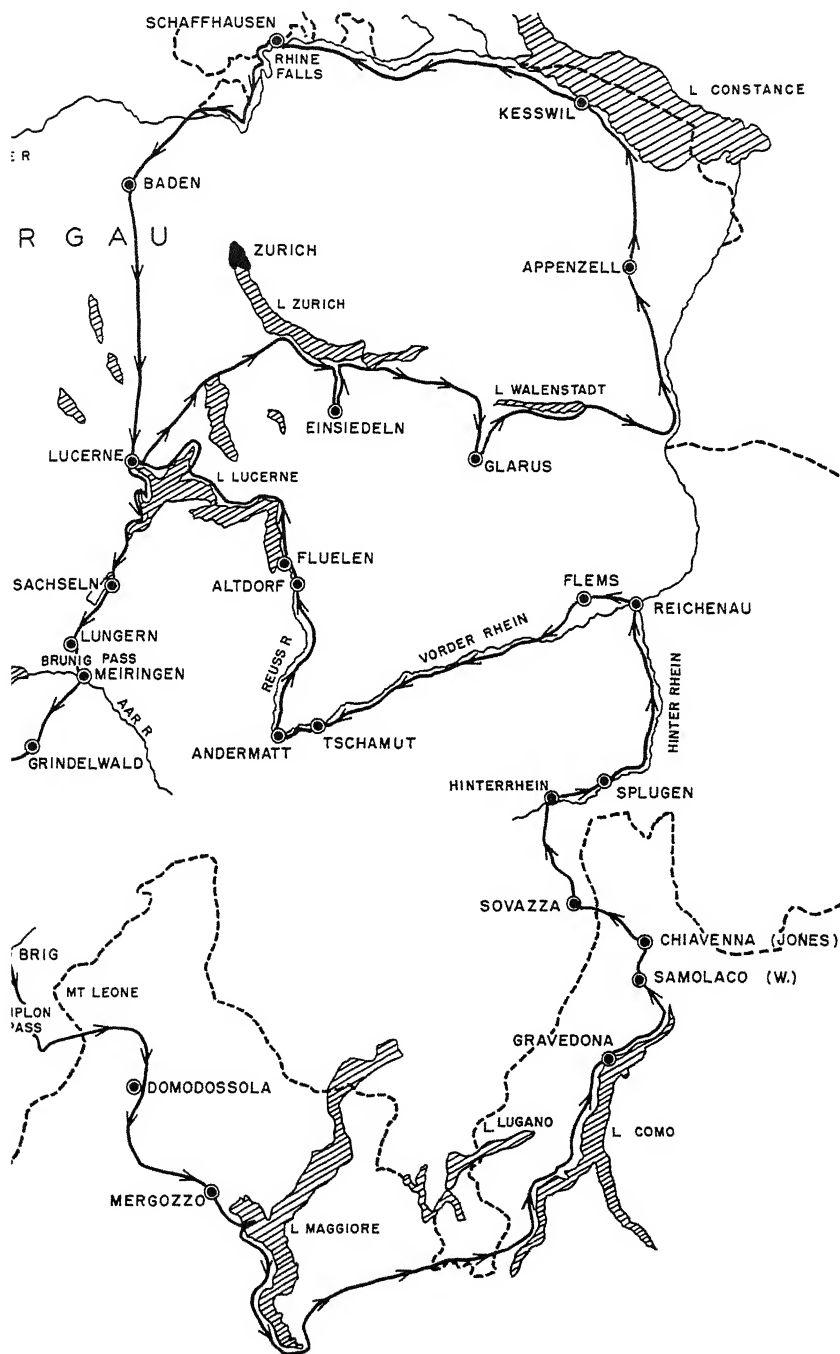
In the Fenwick note to "Stray Pleasures" Wordsworth remarked: "I noticed several [mills] upon the river Saone in the year 1799 [1790]; particularly near the town of Chalons, where my friend Jones and I halted a day when we crossed France, so far on foot. There we embarked and floated down to Lyons."

391-406. The gaiety of this scene with its repetition of "danced round and round" (400, 406) is not retrenched in the later texts nor are the "flowing cups," to which part of the gaiety was due, omitted.

410-14. Here as often the sense of peace touched Wordsworth's heart more poignantly because of the contrast with the "boisterous crew" about him. Cf. i. 430-63, 535-43; ii. 107-14, 128-37, 161-74; v. 374-88, 394-406. The dedication ex-











perience and the meeting with the discharged soldier were preceded by scenes of noisy gaiety.

418. *Convent*: "The word is often popularly restricted to a convent of women, a nunnery, a convent of men being distinguished as a *monastery*; but this is not warranted by historical usage" (*NED*).

419, 421. *solitude*: See Chapter IV and Arnold's "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse."

420-88. Although a number of long passages in the early manuscripts were omitted from the later, this is the only episode which was added in the course of many revisions.<sup>22</sup> (The lines are not remarkable; 426-35, 461-71, and 480-1 touch on subjects which lay deepest in Wordsworth's brooding nature, and in view of the strength of the impression the visit made on him (see de S., 561, note to viii. A 409) the surprising thing would seem to be not the later addition but the original omission of the account.) This omission becomes the more striking when we observe that the two pictures in *Descriptive Sketches* which contain the largest element of personal experience and which are therefore best adapted for use in an autobiography, the visits to Chartreuse and Einsiedeln, are not to be found in the 1805-6 *Prelude*. Both of these places were, however, famous for ecclesiastical establishments and the emotions they aroused were largely religious (note 451-61, 483-8). Towards such establishments and such emotions the Revolution had rendered Wordsworth indifferent if not somewhat hostile, but later, perhaps at the suggestion of Coleridge, who was troubled by his friend's "atheism," he was willing enough to say something of a place that had impressed him profoundly.

420-71, A<sup>2</sup> variant, 9-12. Cloisters which, from the day of their foundation till the day of this sacrilege, had been approached with awe and free from the presence of casual laymen.

420-71, A<sup>2</sup> variant, 22. *obnoxious*: Cf. B(i) 6; Latin *obnoxiosus*, exposed to harm.

427-9. Cf. 451, 481, and see Chapter IV.

435. *eternity*: See pp. 4-5, 239-45 above.

440-7. This praise of "new-born Liberty," which in A<sup>2</sup> is spoken by Nature, is the more creditable since it was called forth by a reprehensible manifestation of that liberty.

448-50. A good figure.

451. *mystery*: Cf. 427-9, 481, and pp. 141-6 above.

461. "And, secondly, for the humbler claim of . . ." (continuing "for the sake Of," 457-8).

464-5. Nowell C. Smith suggests that these obscure lines "must be intended as a description of the mountain-tops, which are 'cerulean ether's pure inhabitants,' and, apparently, shapes which have survived, untransmuted, many transmutations of the earth" and he compares Coleridge's description of the sky around the top of Mt. Blanc in "Hymn before Sun-rise, in the Vale of Chamouni" as "thine own calm home, thy crystal shrine, Thy habitation from eternity!"

467. See i. 409 n., vi. 131 n.

470-1. *the blank abyss*: The abyss "within himself" in which man is "lost" (469), "the mind's abyss" (594, note "lost," A 529), "the dark abyss" over which the mind broods (xiv. 70-2). From this mental abyss man looks "with bodily eyes [upon external nature], and [is] consoled."

481. *darkness*: Cf. v. 598 n., and pp. 162, 429, 483, 600 above.

483-5. Cf. viii. 273-5, ix. 475-8.

495-6. The verbs are more vivid but the lines less flowing than in A.

497. *fourteen weeks*: As they were only three months on the continent they must have spent two weeks in going and returning between Cambridge and Calais.

505. Wordsworth has a number of similar lines (e. g., iii. A 245; v. 28, 415; vi. 41; ix. 285-6; x. A 149; xi. 17; *Excursion*, vi. 386-7; "Musings near Aquapendente," 329) which were probably suggested by Milton's "Unrespited, unpitied, unreprieved" (*Paradise Lost*, ii. 185) and the like. Lines made up chiefly of nouns are iii. 604; vii. A 634, 704; viii. 87-8, 516-17.

509-16. Not in A. Cf. "Michael," 62-77.

517-23. The vale of Trientz, below Martigny. Dorothy was much impressed by it in 1820 even before she learned "it was the same dell, that 'aboriginal vale,' that 'green recess,' so often mentioned by" her brother.<sup>28</sup>

525-8. Cf. "Yarrow Unvisited," 49-56, and "Is this, ye Gods, the Capitolian Hill?" It is unfortunate that the read-

ing of E<sup>2</sup>, "that sudden blank of soul" was not retained and that the "which" of A 455 was changed so as to make two consecutive lines begin with "that."

528-40. Cf. *Descriptive Sketches* (1793), 680-712. The picture of Chamonix may owe something to lines 39-53 of Coleridge's "Hymn before Sun-rise, in the Vale of Chamouni," which were written only two years earlier. Compare especially line 53, "Motionless torrents! silent cataracts!" with 530-1.

533. Cf. v. 515-17, vii. 144-8.

534-7. An unrimed quatrain, the first and third lines of which begin with "There," the second and fourth with "The."

541-3. Explained in A 471-3 and 543-7: They encountered nothing sophisticated or complex, only what appealed to their feelings or evidence of the brotherhood of man and other fundamental truths which were supposed, in the eighteenth century, to be self-evident to "young and old" (547), to men of every climate and every period of history (see iv. A 296 n.).

551-6. Cf. 171-8 n., 342-778 n. A 480 is not in the final text.

552. *gilded*: The word suggests (1) touched up with artificial color but (2) not with real gold.

558. *under-thirst*: See de S. n. to xiv. A 71.

559-77. Wordsworth rewrote this passage several times and improved it not a little. For one thing, the final text makes clear, what is obscure in A, that the "stern mood" was the source of the melancholy referred to in 617; then, too, the pedestrian and unnecessary A 493-4 and A 496-8 are eliminated; and "Travellers" (A 495) is changed to "muleteers" (564). It is unfortunate that the adjectives "deep and genuine" (A 492) were dropped. (Why the two travellers were plunged into melancholy by a cause apparently so trivial and innocent of gloom as the announcement that they "*had crossed the Alps*" is clear from Dorothy's Journal of August 23 and September 9, 1820: "Entering into my brother's youthful feelings of sadness and disappointment when he was told unexpectedly that the Alps were crossed—the effort accomplished. . . . The ambition of youth was disappointed at these tidings." Dorothy continues: "W[illiam] was waiting to show us the track. . . . It was impossible for me to say how much it had moved him, when he discovered it was the very same which had tempted

him in his youth. The feelings of that time came back with the freshness of yesterday, accompanied with a dim vision of thirty years of life between."

562-91. This passage is too long and too detailed, especially as it fails to explain the melancholy on account of which the incident is introduced. It illustrates the difficulty Wordsworth had in escaping from the numerous details of actual experience which confuse the reader and distract his attention from the significance of the experience without giving him a more vivid impression or a better understanding of what happened. See Chapter I. In the *Descriptive Sketches* there is no reference to this episode, to the passage of the "gloomy strait" that follows, or to the sleepless night near Gravedona. To be sure, the first and last of these incidents is too personal to fit into the scheme of the earlier poem, which is a series of pictures; yet the description of the gloomy defile would have been entirely suitable. (Although Wordsworth was probably somewhat slow to realize fully what the austere and terrifying aspects of nature meant to him, his letter to Dorothy from Kesswil shows how profoundly the "terrible majesty" of the Alps impressed him during this crossing (de S., 542, 543). He talked about this majesty in the *Descriptive Sketches* but had no power to express it adequately.)

589-91. The peasant did not say they had crossed the Alps but the details he told them confirmed their fears that they had done so.

592-616. In the *Times Literary Supplement* for April 4, 1929, Professor W. G. Fraser pointed out (1) that this passage "makes a breach in the narrative," which breaks off at 591 and is resumed as if there had been no interruption in 617; (2) that the experience here described must have taken place not during the crossing of the Alps but during the composition of the verses which narrate that crossing; and (3) that in these lines, therefore, "utterance seems," as was rarely the case with Wordsworth, to have followed "hard upon vision." It is clear from A 525-6 and from the D and E versions of these lines that we are here dealing with an experience of 1804 and not of 1790: "Imagination" lifted itself up not "before me" but "Before the . . . progress of my Song"—or, as D

and E have it, "Before the retrospective Song rose up." At the time of crossing the Alps Wordsworth felt only a "dull and heavy slackening" (A 549), as is shown by 557-61 (A 488-92) where the incident is introduced to illustrate the deep sadness that befell him once on the trip. Apparently he had carried his narrative to approximately A 524 when the memory of the eager hopes and the growing anxiety of that unforgettable day, of the melancholy that settled on him, and of the terrible beauty of the pass into which he descended—the recollection of all this moved him strangely. (Perhaps the words, "we had crossed the Alps," the thought of what they meant and of the meanings which might be read into them, exerted something of an hypnotic power so that a mist seemed to wrap him about, cutting him off from the world of the senses. Just what happened he did not know save that it was very wonderful and that he was "lost" to conscious reality (596, 600-1).) He explains it as a visitation of the imagination—perhaps because it seemed a revelation of "infinitude" and the imagination reveals the infinite in the finite, and because the imagination gives significance to a commonplace incident and makes it memorable—but strangely enough he speaks of the imagination not as a faculty which he exercises but as an "awful Power," a daemon, which rises "from the mind's abyss" and seizes him in its grasp.) But this explanation did not satisfy him, for he added in the later texts that the Power was so called only through the limitations of human speech—"Imagination" was as near as he could come to finding a name for it.

We have already seen (pp. 158-9, 164-73 above, where the entire passage is discussed) that (what really happened to him was something akin to the mystic experience. When it passed it left him exalted as if he had seen into the life of things, had gained anew that vision of the eternal realities which is the glory of the soul, that conviction of the infinite and the changeless as the only source of abiding peace and joy.) Hence a new hope and determination were his and a strengthened desire for better things.

The meaning of such terms as "the invisible world" and "infinitude" (and indeed of the entire passage) was presumably very vague in Wordsworth's mind, but he almost certainly

was not thinking of a personal God or of other concepts of the Christian church.

594. *the mind's abyss*: Cf. 469-71; xiv. 66-99 n., 70-2.

595. *unfathered vapour*: One that rises suddenly from no apparent source. "Cloud" of A 529 carries on the figure.

599-602. Cf. ii. 348-52, 415-18, *Excursion*, i. 207-9, and pp. 166, 170 above.

605. *infinitude*: See pp. 4-5, 239-45 above.

609-12. The superiority of being over doing. Cf. *Excursion*, i. 211-18 and pp. 164, 173 above.

615. *Abyssinian*: Used by Wordsworth only here and in 662. The latter instance, "confined as in a depth Of Abyssinian privacy," points clearly to *Rasselas* and not "Kubla Khan" as the source.

617. "Melancholy" was substituted for the more vivid "dull and heavy" (A 549) because the incident is introduced to illustrate a mood of sadness (557-61). The slackening of spirits may have put Wordsworth in a mood to feel to the utmost the "terrible majesty" of the gloomy strait, the impressions of which, as he wrote his sister three weeks later, "will never be effaced" (de S., 542-3). Presumably the "strait" is the Ravine of Gondo, described in Baedeker's *Switzerland* as "one of the wildest . . . defiles in the Alps," which lies between Gabi (Gstein) and Gondo on the Simplon Road. Mr. Clifford Lyons calls my attention to a somewhat similar account of passing through this same ravine in Hervey Allen's *Anthony Adverse*, III, vii, chapter LII.

629, 631-2. Adapted from *Descriptive Sketches* (1793), 130, 249-50 (Nowell Smith).

636-40. Unity; cf. ii. 221 n.

639. *Eternity*: See 605 n.

640. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, v. 165: "Him first, him last, him midst, and without end"; pointed out to me by Mr. Murray Dewart.

647-8. Why did so detailed a recollection of this melancholy place linger in Wordsworth's mind? Dorothy, who described the spot at some length in her journal of September 9, 1820, referred to the "awful night" her brother had spent there.

650-2. The Tusa; see *Descriptive Sketches* (1793), 178-83 and n. Nowell Smith censures the beautiful line 652 for "incongruity of expression" and suggests that Wordsworth "wished to convey two notions, both suggested by the actual appearance of the river, but scarcely able to be entertained as one composite notion." Cf. Thomson's *Spring*, 522-3: "the river now Dimpling along."

658-9. Not in A.

660-72. *Descriptive Sketches* (1793), 80-160, mentions these details. It is only in gardens that "chestnut woods" or other large trees (see 701) now grow on the shores of Como.

660-2. Referring to the high mountains by which Como is "confined" and which make it not unlike the lakes amid which Wordsworth grew up. This similarity may be in part responsible for his enthusiasm.

662. See 615 n.

667. That is, there is no road. See quotation from Wordsworth's letter given in de S., 542 at the bottom of the page.

675-7. A good figure.

678. *a serene accord*: A truer picture of Como than an "impassion'd sight" of A 608, which, however, gives us a better idea of the young Wordsworth's feelings. In comparison with the assertiveness of "the more awful scenes of the Alps" (letter to Dorothy, de S., 543) the loveliness of Como seemed "passive."

684-7. This genuinely religious passage is in A.

687. *this last herself*: Probably "silent blessedness."

691-726. This incident is described as if it were unpleasant, but so are most of the memorable episodes recorded in *The Prelude*. The space devoted to it is striking in view of the large part of the trip that is omitted, and the profusion and vividness of the details show how deep an impression it left. Here again the poet seems to have fed his soul on darkness. The mystery, not untouched by fear, of the night, the unknown place, the strange sounds and movements, the sense of being lost, "bewildered among woods immense," stirred the depth of his mind's abyss as the two golden days had not done. The feeling did not go so far as "incumbencies" or "a dim and undetermined sense Of unknown modes of being"; indeed the



deeper significance of the incident may have come to Wordsworth only as he brooded over it afterwards. It has affinities with the night, likewise unpleasant but seemingly memorable, spent in the solitary inn "deafened and stunned By noise of waters" (641-8). Lines 713-26 are an admirable expression of that mingling of physical sensation and mystical feeling which is characteristic of Wordsworth (cf. 621-40).

692-4. It seems strange that both travellers should have believed that the night was nearly over when "scarcely more than one hour" of it was gone (A 639-40), but fatigue may account for this mistake. The early Italian usage was to begin numbering the hours at Ave-Maria, half an hour after sunset. Today in Italy many clocks strike first the quarter and then the hour so that one forty-five (3 + 1 bells) may be mistaken for four, or two o'clock (4 + 2 bells) for six. Some clocks formerly struck no more than six and then began again at one, but I do not know that that was an Italian custom.<sup>24</sup>

700. *Gravedona*: A town on the western shore of the northern end of Lake Como, which Wordsworth left August 21.

A 645. *darkness visible*: Cf. *Paradise Lost*, i. 63.

716. Admirably phrased.

727. Except for a brief reference to passing the Belgian armies (762-5), Wordsworth says nothing of the last six weeks of his trip. His description of the first five weeks omits almost everything except (1) the charm of France and the enthusiasm of the French for the Revolution, (2) the Grande Chartreuse, (3) the Simplon Pass, (4) Como, and (5) the night at Gravedona—a striking illustration of the omissions which distinguish *The Prelude* from a chronicle of biographical facts.

728-31. Substituted for A 659-61, dull, unnecessary lines in which the machinery of the poem creaks.

✓731-42. "Nature, therefore, though proceeding from a common spiritual source, is subordinate in dignity to the human soul. In interpreting her beauty, man is not prostrating himself before an outward glory, but reading the symbols of his inner life, presented by virtue of the mysterious analogy of matter and spirit in the forms of a sensible world" (J. Shawcross' introduction to his edition of *Biographia Literaria*, I,

xxxv). The creative powers of the mind and its superiority in beauty and importance to external nature are mentioned in ii. 245-61, 358-74; v. 595-605; xii. 220-3 (contrast 127-31); xiv. 448-54. See notes to these passages. Presumably 733-5 refer to expressions like "This is the most beautiful view in the world" or "the grandest sight I have ever seen" or to comparisons with the English and Welsh mountains to their disparagement. Such comparisons are again condemned in xii. 109-23 (a passage much like this one) as a kind of sitting in judgment which is likely to blind us

to the moods

Of time and season, to the moral power,  
The affections and the spirit of the place.

The figure implied in 738-9 is that of standing in the presence of God (as in iv. 150-2) or of a sovereign; cf. xii. 206 and pp. 74-5 above.

742-6. The summer did not develop new tendencies in him but strengthened those he already had. The Alps were grander than the mountains among which he had grown up but otherwise they were much the same and so were the feelings they roused in him. Lines 745-7, substituted for the pedestrian A 675, carry on the figure implied in "gale," of a boat driven forward, and assert more emphatically the ministry of what was heard and seen.

748. Cf. de S., 553 line 2.

754-60. This joyous passage anticipates the later one on the same theme, xi. 108-44, which begins, "Bliss was it in that dawn." For Wordsworth is not here speaking of his trip but of the general feeling in Europe during the early years of the Revolution.

760. An excellent figure. "Budding" is much better than "vernal" of A 687.

766-78. In view of these lines, of ix. 67-92, and viii. 340-56, it seems likely that much of the interest in the Revolution expressed in this book is a reading back into the period of a later attitude.

766-7. Perhaps Wordsworth had in mind the ceremony by which, among some peoples, youths of a certain age cease to be

"striplings" and are formally inducted into citizenship or its equivalent.

767-8. In ix. A 24 Wordsworth uses the same expression to describe his relation to the life of London. Cf. also x. 55-63.

768. Wordsworth does not say "thought." Cf. xii. A 238.

770-2. Cf. ix. 243-8. "Sport, or feeds," a late change, is much better than "business" (A 699).

773-8. These beautiful lines, which give a serene and confident conclusion to the book, are a great improvement over A 700-705. The rhythm, to be sure, leaves much to be desired; but the repetition of "need" in A 700 is eliminated, vivid verbs are substituted for "were" and "was" in the last three lines (cf. de S., xlv), the style (which in A recalls that of a child's first reader) is condensed, and a fresh delightful image is added. It is illuminating to trace the development of this image from A through D<sup>2</sup> and E to E<sup>2</sup> where, so late as 1839, its full beauty at last emerges. Cf. 51-2 n. In *Descriptive Sketches* the account of the trip ends with a prayer for the success of the Revolution; but here, remembering his feelings at the time, Wordsworth stresses the opening glories of nature and "the independent spirit of pure youth." These deep springs of joy and strength, from which later was to come most of his poetry, so filled his heart to the brim as to leave little room for man or movements in behalf of man's regeneration. It was only as the glad animal exuberance and the care-free delight in nature of these days sobered somewhat, that serious thought could be given to the problems of human life.

774. *the ever-living universe*: Cf. ii. 386-418.

776. *independent*: Cf. 32-3 n. and "The confidence of Youth our only Art," which is the first line of a sonnet written thirty years later in reference to part of this trip.

777. "which were" is understood after "delights."

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *The Early Wordsworth*, English Association, 1936, p. 28

<sup>2</sup> A. Dacey (*The Statesmanship of Wordsworth*, Oxford, 1917, p. 10) refers to the verses on Rob Roy and might have added "The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale" Wordsworth's early love of deeds of adventure (*Recluse*, I: 1 703-25) and later interest in books of travel (see iii 433-44 n.) are part of this same general tendency.

<sup>3</sup> *The Prelude*, Golden Treasury Series, ed. E. E. Reynolds, 1932, p. viii.

<sup>4</sup> William Jerdan, *Men I Have Known*, 1866, p. 484

<sup>5</sup> Wordsworth probably exaggerated to tease Mathews, who was amazingly industrious, "indefatigable in his search after knowledge" (see Harper, I, 114).

<sup>6</sup> "Valued most" (99) is probably more accurate than "lov'd the most" (A 117), which says quite a different thing

<sup>7</sup> *The Later Wordsworth*, Cambridge, 1933, pp. 26-7.

<sup>8</sup> *Literary and Lake Reminiscences, Collected Writings*, ed. Masson, II, 267-8

<sup>9</sup> Second ed., 1764, pp. 82-3, my italics

<sup>10</sup> See de Selincourt, *The Early Wordsworth* (English Association, 1936), pp. 9-12, 26.

<sup>11</sup> John Dix, quoted in F. V. Morley's *Dora Wordsworth her Book*, Boston, 1925, p. 119

<sup>12</sup> Fenwick note to *The Excursion*; letter to Mathews of September 23, 1791, Dorothy's letter to Jane Pollard of December 7, 1791.

<sup>13</sup> *Unpublished Letters of S. T. C.*, ed. Griggs, 1932, I, 12-14.

<sup>14</sup> *The Concept of Nature*, New York, 1936, p. 127.

<sup>15</sup> Letter to Mary and Dorothy of August 29, 1829; cf. letter to Dora and Mary of June 21, 1837.

<sup>16</sup> Letter to Mathews of May 17, 1792

<sup>17</sup> Letter to Christopher Wordsworth of January 4, 1825.

<sup>18</sup> Near the end of his letter to Dorothy of September 6 to 16, 1790, Wordsworth wrote: "as he ["my uncle"] was acquainted with my having given up all thoughts of a fellowship, he may, perhaps, not be so much displeased at this journey."

<sup>19</sup> Dorothy's letter to Mrs. Clarkson of September 9, 1831. Her brother seems to have said a good deal to her about this trip, for her journal of the continental tour of 1820 records her interest in seeing the places he had visited in the course of it (de Selincourt, *Dorothy Wordsworth*, Oxford, 1933, pp. 329-30), and she wrote to Crabb Robinson on December 21, 1822, that in her "young days" her brother "used to talk so much" of his visit to the Chartreuse. When he composed and likewise when he revised *The Prelude*, Wordsworth dwelt lovingly on this summer, not only in this book but in x 490-510 and in xii. 180-92.

<sup>20</sup> "We are now . . . upon the point of quitting the most sublime and beautiful parts; and you cannot imagine the melancholy regret which I feel at the idea. . . the idea of parting from them oppresses me with . . . sadness."

<sup>21</sup> Towards the close of his letter, Wordsworth writes, "I have had, during the course of this delightful tour, a great deal of uneasiness from an apprehension of your anxiety on my account." See also Dorothy's letter to Jane Pollard of October 6, 1790.

<sup>22</sup> The only other passage of any length that is not in A is the eulogy of Burke, vii. 512-50.

<sup>23</sup> See Professor de Selincourt's *Dorothy Wordsworth*, Oxford, 1933, pp. 330-1.

<sup>24</sup> See *Enciclopedia Italiana di scienze, lettere, ed arti*, Roma, 1935, xxv, 421; E. J. Wood, *Curiosities of Clocks and Watches*, 1866. These references were called to my attention by two of my students, Lewis C. Richardson and Claude Jones.

## BOOK VII

THERE is a falling off in the remaining books of *The Prelude*, not only in spontaneity and freshness but also in depth and passion. Wordsworth had now dealt with the years which were the feeding source of his poetry, and had said the things which lay nearest to his heart. Much that is great and still more that is good lies ahead of us, passages of unusual biographical interest and of supreme importance for the understanding of his thought, but the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" has abated. The poet himself feared this, and it may be that he laid the work aside throughout the summer of 1804 partly because he was

checked by . . . tamer argument  
That lies before us, needful to be told, (vii. 50-1)

but which he felt no great inclination to tell.

Book VII is professedly an account of the three and a half months Wordsworth spent in London in 1791, from the early part of February to the last week of May,<sup>1</sup> at the close of his twenty-first year; but presumably records impressions he received in the course of his much longer residence there at various times between 1793 and 1795 as well as his more recent visits in July and September, 1802.<sup>2</sup> Indeed Professor de Selincourt believes (p. xxxix) that originally this book was to have followed those that deal with France in the Revolution. (London is, however, pictured as it impressed a stranger to life in a metropolis, one free in heart and mind, and not as it must have struck Wordsworth on his return from Paris, preoccupied with the Revolution, worried about finances, the future, and Annette, and out of sympathy with his native land. Except for the second visit to Paris, in 1792, when he was absorbed in political events, these were the only periods in which Wordsworth had his home in a great city; hence he makes his first brief residence in London the occasion for considering the contribution of city life to the development of the poet. What he has to say of this contribution seems to Mr. Harper (I, 106),

and to others, "a little forced." And apparently it did not satisfy its author for, although he wrote of London at (relatively) undue length in this book, he returned to it again in viii. 70-3, 530-675, ix. 23-33, and xiii. 110-16. Furthermore, in viii. 533-9 he declares that in the present book he was "light" in mood, and "played idly with the flowers . . . satisfied With that amusement." It looks as if, although conscious of the inadequacy of what he had written, he could not bring himself to revise it radically. One difficulty lay in his inability throughout his later years to do justice to city life,<sup>3</sup> and this not only because of his love of nature and of plain living but because he believed such life to be destructive of individuality (725-8) and numbing to the creative powers (679-81), and because in his own case it had meant separation from those he loved and wandering in the deserts of Godwinian rationalism. Then, too, as Raleigh observed, "He could look on the seething life of London with a glazed philosophic eye, and find in that confused theatre of pleasure and pain no more than the tumbling of so many marionettes. Before it could touch him near, an experience had to be simple and isolated."<sup>4</sup> Yet, according to Professor Legouis,

The future poet of the lakes was really the first, if not to feel, at any rate to attempt to render in verse worthy of the theme, and without satirical design, the grandeur of London and the intensity of its life. Strange as this fact appears at first sight, it is less surprising when we reflect that the requisite striking impression could only be felt by a man fresh from the world outside of London, capable of new and vivid sensations, and sufficiently open in mind and independent of classical authorities to venture on a frank description of his novel impressions. (trs., p. 170)

Book VII reveals a contradiction similar to the one we have noticed in Book III: Wordsworth still remembered with pleasure the thrill of his first weeks in London (A 139-53) and despite his disapproval of the metropolis something of its glamor yet remained. A passage in the *Letter to Mathetes* implies as much:

I will compare . . . an aspiring youth, leaving the schools in which he has been disciplined, and preparing to bear a part in the concerns of the world, I will compare him in this season of eager admiration, to a

newly-invested knight appearing with his blank unsignalized shield, upon some day of solemn tournament, at the court of the Faery-queen. . . . He does not himself immediately enter the lists as a combatant, but he looks round him with a beating heart, dazzled by the gorgeous pageantry, the banners, the impresses, the ladies of overcoming beauty, the persons of the knights, now first seen by him, the fame of whose actions is carried by the traveller, like merchandize, through the world, and resounded upon the harp of the minstrel.<sup>5</sup>

There is, however, little suggestion of glamor in the only contemporary account of his first long stay in the city:

I quitted London about three weeks ago, where my time passed in a strange manner; sometimes whirled about by the vortex of its *strenua inertia*, and sometimes thrown by the eddy into a corner of the stream, where I lay in almost motionless indolence.

Think not, however, that I had not many very pleasant hours, a man must be unfortunate indeed who resides four months in Town without some of his time being disposed of in such a manner, as he would forget with reluctance.<sup>6</sup>

On April 8, 1808, Wordsworth wrote Beaumont: "You will deem it strange, but really some of the imagery of London has, since my return hither, been more present to my mind than that of this noble vale. . . . I cannot say how much I was affected at" the sight of Ludgate Hill and St. Paul's, "solemnised by a thin veil of falling snow."

Professor de Selincourt believes (p. xxxix) that VII was in the main written during April, October, and November, 1804, but he shows that A 721-9 was composed between January 20 and March 5, 1798, and A 699-712 probably between October and December, 1800 (pp. xxi-iii).

To the list of MSS for Book VII should be added: "*for ll.* [A] 721-9 Alfoxden Note Book."

1-4. Cf. de S., xxxi-ii, 500-1, and [608 G-H] (additional note to i. A 1-54), where we learn that the first draft of i. A 40-8 was "written in Germany during the winter of 1798-9" and where Wordsworth's confusion of the date of his escape from the city with that of his beginning *The Prelude* is compared with "a similar confusion and blending of separate occasions into one" which is pointed out in the supplementary note to vi. A 216-45. Professor W. G. Fraser maintains that A 5-9



does not fit i. A 1-54 and that Wordsworth is here referring to the Prospectus to *The Recluse*, but he fails to account satisfactorily for vii. 2-3; Mr. D. H. Bishop likewise presents vigorously the difficulties offered by the Garrod-de Selincourt interpretation of these lines.<sup>7</sup>

5-13. Simpler and more euphonious (note A 9-11) and, except for "So willed the Muse," better than the early versions; "uproar" (A 6) does not fit "sang" and the figures in A 7 and A 9 are not happy.

18. *hindrance*: Mrs. Wordsworth was not well (Dora was born August 16), John (born the previous June) needed much attention, and there were many visitors. Under such conditions in a house so small as Dove Cottage work was extremely difficult. Undoubtedly Wordsworth was guilty of the "indolence" mentioned in A 20 (see vi. A 46 n.) but that was more or less implied in "voluntary holiday" whereas "hindrance" was not.

A 23-56. The final text is shortened but not otherwise improved by the omission of A 23, A 29, and most of A 33; but "to . . . welcome" (A 26-7) as well as "And hath begun" (A 31) were wisely dropped. "Due to this timely notice" (27) is more pedestrian than "At this unthought of greeting" (A 32), as "in whispers said" (28) is than "half whispered" (A 34), while "Associates" (30) is certainly inferior to "Brethren" (A 36). Yet in 45-8 and 53-6 the later version is the better.

44-8. Wordsworth refers again in xii. 328-35 to the stimulus his creative powers received from boughs tossed by a strong wind. Cf. also A variant of i. A 44-8; ii. 298; viii. A 80; de S., 557, lines 164-7; x. 434; xiii. 1-10; "The Minstrels played," 76; and Coleridge's "Dejection," 15-20. Dorothy wrote Lady Beaumont, November 29, 1805, that "winter winds" were her brother's "delight" and added, "his mind . . . is often more fertile in this season than any other"; but he found pleasure in the motions of physical objects of all kinds, see *Recluse*, I. i. 24-44. Burns wrote in his First Common Place Book:

There is scarcely any earthly object gives me more—I don't know if I should call it pleasure, but something which exalts me, something which enraptures me—than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood

or high plantation, in a cloudy winter day, and hear a stormy wind howling among the trees and raving o'er the plain.

(Centenary edition, I, 374)

50-1. See p. 435 above.

52-7. How much studying Wordsworth did at Cambridge on his return from Switzerland and how much at Fornsett in the six weeks he spent there with Dorothy we do not know, but it would seem that from July, 1790, until January, 1793, his life was largely a vacation. *The Prelude* says nothing of his last year at the university—he was in residence only five weeks—but we learn from the *Memoirs* (I, 48) that “the week before he took his degree he passed his time in reading *Clarissa Harlowe*.” “For ever” (53)—A 57-60 is still more emphatic—ignores his return to Cambridge to study oriental languages; see Dorothy's letter of October 9, 1791.

A 61. *A casual Reveller and at large*: Presumably omitted because, in view of 64-5 (A 70-2), misleading; yet the words must have meant something more than “idler” (72).

58. The comma after “Yet” must be a mistake since it is not in A and since the context makes clear that the meaning is not adversative but temporal, “as yet.”

64. *self-willed*: See iii. 355 n.

A 71. This line, omitted from the final text, makes still more emphatic Wordsworth's assertion of his temperance and purity, an assertion which, together with the earlier ones concerning his conduct at the university (iii. 494-6, A 531-6, A 531-41 n.; viii. 510-17 and n.) and his expression of the horror and pity stirred in him by prostitution (A 412-34), it is important, in view of the Annette episode, not to forget.

69-76. As X, the earliest MS of VII that we have, does not contain 1-68 (A 1-74), the opening lines were probably not composed at the same time as the remainder of the book. In MS X, vii. A 75-740 follow immediately after viii. A 741-50 (de S., xxiii, xxxix). MS X contains two versions of A 90 (or A 81)-135, A 181-218 (*ibid.*, xxiii, xxxviii), from the earlier of which, a rough draft, Professor de Selincourt apparently does not give any readings.

72-6. It mattered little to Wordsworth that his room was poor and bare since he presumably spent few of his waking

hours in it. His interests were in the streets, theatres, and other public places.

✓ 77-84. An expression of that love of romance which, despite the matter-of-fact and even pedestrian side of his nature, was very strong and deep in Wordsworth. See pp. 19-21, 402 above and also i. 166-220; v. 56-140, 341-4, 453-533; vi. 73-94; vii. 413-21, 449-57; viii. 75-97, 406-20; ix. 204-8, 300-2, 437-91; x. 17-24; xiii. 142-59, 312-49; de S., 521-2; 555, lines 80-98; 602-5, lines 60-114; *Excursion*, i. 177-85. Wordsworth was an admirer of Ariosto and Tasso, whom he held to be "very absurdly depressed in order to elevate Dante."<sup>8</sup> Professor Bradley (*Oxford Lectures*, pp. 114-15) reminds us of the "Arabian sands" in the "Solitary Reaper" (cf. ix. A 582-3), of Wordsworth's love of Spenser, of his effective handling in "Ruth" of "un-English scenery," of old Triton's wreathed horn, and of the

Lady of the Mere,  
Sole-sitting by the shores of old romance.  
("A narrow girdle," 37-8)

Wordsworth's fondness for books of travel (see iii. 433-44 n.), and for the *Arabian Nights* (v. 460-76), his advocacy of fairy tales and of stories of Jack the Giant-killer and Robin Hood for children (v. 341-6, 451-533), the attraction that "daring feat" and "enterprize forlorn" had for him (*The Recluse*, i. i. 703-25), the importance he attached to the ministry of fear (see Chapter III) and of wonder (see pp. 480-92 above) are all related to his love of romance. The passage is as Miltonic in spirit as in style, since few poets have had a keener relish for the literature of high adventure and of strange, remote splendors than the author of *Paradise Lost*. Lines 80-81 have the romantic suggestiveness but little of the music that Milton drew from proper names.

A 103-4. Cf. *Immortality Ode*, 64-5.

103. *vanity*: Latin *vanitas*, the unprofitable employment of time, i.e. day-dreaming. Lines 103-8 are substituted for A 109-10.

105. *fear*: See Chapter III.

111-15. English readers need not be told that young Dick Whittington when leaving London in discouragement heard

from Holloway the bells of St. Mary-le-Bow, which seemed to say to him:

Turn again, Whittington,  
Lord Mayor of London.

Whereupon, he returned to the city of which he was later thrice Lord Mayor. He and his cat are mentioned in *Excursion*, vii. 91-2.

119-21. Hardly clearer than A 121-3: the words Vauxhall and Ranelagh though not in themselves sweet (see de S., xlvii and n.) become so because of the associations connected with them.

128. *broad-day . . . permanent*: Contrasted with the nocturnal and evanescent wonders of Vauxhall and Ranelagh; 123-8 are substituted for A 125-8.

A 133. *Streets without end*: Cf. 68, "endless streets," which is not in the corresponding passage in A.

133-4, 137-41, 149-50 are not in A, and A 145-55, A 159-71 are not in the final text (although A 164 appears slightly changed as 213). The moralizing of 149-50 is a poor substitute for the Whitmanesque list of A 159-71, among the most vivid parts of Wordsworth's picture of London (cf. 689-721).

139. Cf. "Peele Castle," 51, "Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time."

(145-8. The reality often disappointed the expectations he had formed of London; yet he was pleased with what he saw because it was the truth. He was glad to know things as they are and, in the case of historical objects, to form a more just conception of the past.)

A 147-8. "Many things, as I idly recall them, half seem not memories but the creations of fancy." Cf. iii. 612-16 n.

156-8. Notice the repetition and parallelism.

166-7. Cf. i. 509-35 n.

171. A pleasing line.

193. *dead walls*: Presumably walls closing passages through which there is no thoroughfare.

196. The semicolon should come after "merit," as in A.

197-8. MS X makes clear that "that" is a ballad, the beginnings of which lure one to purchase it but which one finds, on reading it to the end, has been a hoax.

210. *decent*: Latin, *decentem*, what is fitting, hence modest.

219-20. Stylistically a great improvement over A 233-6, which is most awkward; yet this late addition gives the impression that the stay in London was marked by critical observation and reflection whereas A 61, A 141, A 145-53 (all omitted from the final text) picture it as a time of idleness and pleasure.

227-32. The change from the plural to the singular and then again to the plural (227-8) is unpleasant. "Negro Ladies," not negresses (who could not have afforded muslin) but dark-skinned ladies from India.<sup>9</sup> Lines 229-32 are jerky.

230. Hitherto only out-door spectacles have been described.

232-59. These lines together with a number of those that follow might well have been omitted for the sake of a fuller treatment of the Swiss or Welsh trips.

240-59. Lines 248-59 describe small painted models in which no deception is attempted, but 240-7 refer to sights something like the Pantheon de la Guerre or the "Battle of Gettysburg" in which the spectator stands in the center of a circular building and receives the impression, through the skilful merging of foreground and walls, that he sees to the horizon. See ix. 31 n. A 269-71 is omitted from the final text.

260. *And*: A misreading of "Add," which is indistinctly written in E (de S., [608 G], supplementary note).

266. *her*: Wordsworth must have forgotten the "its" of 264 when he changed "its" (A 287) to "her."

270. *nor blush to add*: Substituted for "and . . . irksomeness" (A 291-2). In view of the subject, the style and diction of both texts are grandiose.

v. 274-87. Another instance of Wordsworth's interest in psychology (see i. 135-45 n.) as well as an example of his humor (see i. 509-35 n.).

288-90. Clearer and pleasanter than A 310-12, the first three words of which are repeated from A 296.

288. *Here*: At Sadler's Wells. De S., [608 G] cites Mary Lamb's letter to Dorothy Wordsworth describing the play, *Edward and Susan or the Beauty of Buttermere*, by Charles Dibdin the younger, which was given at Sadler's Wells ("the lowest and most London-like of our amusements") in April, May, and June, 1803.

293. More sententious and sonorous but less natural than A 315.

294. *the daring brotherhood*: The managers of Sadler's Wells.

295-316. "Serious" and "light" (295) are better than "holy" and "such" (A 317); A 318-19 were wisely dropped; 298-9 are preferable to A 322-3; and 305-6 are far smoother than the awkward A 329-31 (although "By us unheard of" is of some interest). The almost monosyllabic 302-3 are, however, distinctly inferior to A 326-8 and the superfluous 314-15 are a poor substitute for 339-45, despite the ponderous A 339-40 and the cacophonous "Must haply often" (A 343). Line 316 is smoother than A 346 but both are bad; "this memorial" is taken from A 339; a comma is needed after "tribute."

316-20. These lines recall vi. 592-616 and throw some light on the process of poetic composition. Wordsworth had finished what he intended to say about Mary of Buttermere when her image rose and held him. Although on this occasion he was not "lost; Halted without an effort to break through" (vi. 596-7), the lines that follow are less the product of his voluntary mind than those that precede and are correspondingly better poetry.

320-8. Cf. A 401-11 and v. 391-7. The figure in 324-8 is admirable.

330. The eight low words of this line were never changed.

333-99. The thought of Mary of Buttermere and her child apparently recalled the other, very different mother with her beautiful boy, and the character and surroundings of this second mother seem in turn to have suggested the succeeding paragraph on prostitutes, 382-99.

341-7. The somewhat diffuse 341-3 (which seem inconsistent with A 392-4) and 345-7 replace the bald A 371, A 373-4.

346. *lustres*: Chandeliers or prismatic glass pendants attached to chandeliers; cf. A 440.

A 379, A 389, A 394. "Cottage" (repeated in each of the two following lines), "indecent speech" (synonymous with "ribaldry" in the same line), and "behold" ("beheld" appears in the next line) were omitted in revision.

355-9, 366. A marked improvement over the stilted A 381-5 and the wordy A 392-4.

370-8. Although the final text escapes the awkwardness of A 398-401 ("embalm'd" is unfortunate) and omits the needless A 407-8, it contains nothing so moving as A 402-6, which may have seemed unduly personal.

382-3, 388. An effective condensation of A 412-15, A 420-3, although A 412-13 are clearer and A 421-3 more vivid than the lines which replace them. One does not shudder from the bottom of one's heart.

387. And abandoned to the pride of men who were willing that a certain number of women should be sacrificed.

✓ 388-91. Such women seemed to be cut off from the human race (although still possessing a human form, A 425). The interesting addition in MS X reaffirms the unity of mankind (see ii. 221 n.; viii. 665-72; xiii. 216-20) and declares that evil persons infect those about them as with a poisonous breath. The profound impression the prostitute made on Wordsworth is noteworthy; see A 71 n.

401. *argument*: Latin, *argumentum*, theme. Wordsworth now returns to his account of London theatres, begun in 260 and broken off in 297.

402-6. Very different from A 438-40, which may have seemed too personal but which give a less serious and doubtless truer picture of the young Wordsworth than that suggested by the later text. Cf. 446-7. "Casual incidents of real life," chance encounters such as that with the beautiful boy and with the prostitute.

413-21, 450-7. Romance; see 77-84 n.

421-9. Humor; see i. 509-35 n.

434-47, 450-57. Keen self-analysis; see i. 135-45 n.

443-7. Like most young men, Wordsworth was mature in some respects but very much of a boy in others.

450-5. Cf. de S., 559, line 229. It was not the play but the sudden, vivid realization that he was seeing a play which "gladdened" him.

460-5. The meaning apparently is that important matters are often closely connected with things in themselves as trivial as those just described, and that frequently it is the trivial that

preserves the memory of the important. But Wordsworth gives no illustration and one suspects he is merely rationalizing his interests and inclination.

469-76. Another instance of Wordsworth's emotional nature (see viii. A 841-2 n.) and of his keen self-analysis (see i. 135-45 n.)—which comes out again in 482-3. Powerfully as the theatre moved him, it rarely touched his imagination.

477-85. Line 479 is a condensation of A 507-8 just as 481 is of A 511-12; in 480, however, a new idea is introduced—"Rose to ideal grandeur"; 484 with its pretentious commonplaceness was added for the sake of clarity. "The plays reached my inner mind and touched my imagination only on those rare occasions when the acting rose to ideal grandeur or was so inadequate that, in criticizing it to myself, I came to realize more clearly the vague conceptions I had formed of the characters or the interpretation of the lines." On "ideal" see v. 457; xiv. 76; and p. 246 above.

486-771. The remainder of the book reveals few differences in phrasing between the early and late texts. On the other hand, 512-50 is, after vi. 420-88 (the visit to Chartreuse), the longest single passage added to the poem after the completion of A; and 598-625 is the only passage transferred to a different book after the completion of A.

486-511. A curious passage, in which the experiences and feelings of 1791 are colored with the scorn of 1793-1804. The satire (see v. 293-346 n.), which is heralded in 486-9 and acknowledged in 512-13 and A 543-5, is most obvious in 490-3, 498, 501-3 (a masterly blending of compliment and ridicule), and 506-8. Although the apologetic tone of 512-18 suggests Burke as the object of this satire, Miss Batho argues convincingly that it was directed against Pitt.<sup>10</sup> Wordsworth wrote Haydon on July 8, 1831, "I am averse (with that wisest of the Moderns Mr. Burke) to all *hot* Reformations."

514-15, 523-34, 544-50. Not in the first draft, lines x-xv of which are not in the final text. On 544-50 see the conclusion of the note to xiv. 179-87.

551-72. Satire; see v. 293-346 n.

555. "The melting voice through mazes running" ("L'Allegro," 142).



565-6. Added to A to make clear which "Doctor Young" is meant, but the satirical touch is lost and 566 is mechanical, eighteenth-century verse.

591-2. Clearer, briefer, smoother than A 584-6.

598-618. See the various notes on viii. A 836-58. When Wordsworth transferred this passage from viii he failed to observe that 599-602 expresses the same idea as 619-25.

619-25. Substituted for A 592-3 when 598-618 were added. See preceding note. A 593 is contrasted with "everywhere" (A 590); "single" (623) with "huge . . . mass" (621). "Fermenting" (621) throws an unpleasant light on Wordsworth's "love of man"—the topic of the following book. Cf. A 698-700; de S., pp. 547-8; x. 168, 213-16; xi. 11.

625. *inherent*: More liveliness and power than in themselves they possess.

626-49. Cf. viii. 539-59 and see pp. 143, 172 above and Chapter viii. The passage is characteristic of Wordsworth's peculiar power, just as the unnecessary details of 638-42 are of his limitations.

650-71. The scene just described owes its impressiveness to the imagination whereas most city sights stultify the imagination (see 679-81). Wordsworth at first says that the night scenes which follow, inasmuch as they appear to be but slightly modified by the imagination and as they impress almost every one, came "full-formed" to the mind. But as he proceeds and pictures the strange, haunting impressiveness of the deserted streets he realizes that it is only as the mind answers to such scenes that their peculiar beauty is felt. He then turns to spectacles which are "completed to our hands" and owe nothing to the creative mind. Yet a comment in the succeeding paragraph shows that this distinction also is unsound since the wearying confusion of the city, though "by nature an unmanageable sight," is not wholly so to him

who hath among least things  
An under-sense of greatest; sees the parts  
As parts, but with a feeling of the whole. (732-6)

Indeed, the difference is only in degree and in the aptitude of the observer. An imaginative mind may discover as much

"meaning" in Bartholomew Fair as in the sightless beggar—  
 "A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees."

The beauty of London is not the theme of any of these lines or of any others in *The Prelude*; yet it is clear from the present passage and from others in this book, as well as from the Westminster Bridge sonnet, that Wordsworth was unusually aware of such beauty. The most surprising of these memorable night scenes, which are unlike anything in previous English poetry, is the last: the picture of winter evenings when "rains Are falling hard," the prostitute's "feeble salutation"

Heard as we pass, when no one looks about,  
 Nothing is listened to. (662-8)

It is noteworthy that here again we have bad weather (see i. 416-18 n.) and scenes that owe their impressiveness to the solitude of the observer (see Chapter iv).

675-721. According to Henry Morley,<sup>11</sup> the fair, which had formerly begun on or about St. Bartholomew's day (August 24) and had lasted two weeks or longer, was held after 1753 only from September 3d to 7th. On September 7, 1802, it was visited by Charles Lamb and Wordsworth (see Lamb's letter to Coleridge of September 8, 1802). There is no evidence that before 1802 Wordsworth was in London during the time of the fair; in 1791 he was probably in Wales, possibly in Cambridge. Hence these lines deal with an experience that presumably took place only two years before they were written. Wordsworth would have viewed the scene with other eyes in 1791.

✓ (679-81. Lines 731-6 point out that this need not be entirely true; see 650-71 n. According to *The Excursion*, iv. 819-25, the imagination of the shepherd is invigorated by his surroundings while that of the worldling is wasted on fickle, superfluous, and trivial things. Herein, says Raleigh, lay Wordsworth's chief objection to the city: "It distracted the senses with its multitudinous solicitations, and left no work for the imagination to do. Like a huge hall for the display of machinery, a great city exhibits a vast multiplicity of objects, each designed only for the end which it is fulfilling. . . . It acted on him like an opiate" (*Wordsworth*, p. 186). Pater wrote: "The glories of Italy and Switzerland . . . had too potent a material life of

their own to serve greatly his poetic purpose" ("Wordsworth," *Appreciations*). The same was true of London.

685-705. One sentence of 21 lines, which in A begins nearly four lines earlier. See v. 197-222 n. It is amusing to find "hell" (A 658) weakened to "shock" (685).

689-721. This vivid picture is similar to that described in A 159-71, which is not in the final text.

700. *weaves*: "Sway[s] the body alternately to one side and the other" (NED).

704. See vi. 505 n.

706. *moveables of wonder*: Strange sights that can be moved about.

708. *Horse of knowledge*: A horse that has been trained to pick out certain cards and the like.

717. *compose*: Eliminates the second "up" of A 690.

722-44. Cf. *Excursion*, iv. 819-25 (summarized in 679-81 n.) and *Recluse*, I. i. 593-607 (quoted in part on p. 58 above); see also Chapter vi.

722. The awkwardness of A 695 is eliminated.

724. Replaces A 697-700 with its complacency (for Wordsworth must be one of the Stragglers of A 697) and its contempt for city dwellers (see pp. 120, 302-3, 436 above and 619-25 n.). Unless "To" of A 698 was copied by mistake from the line above and should be "Of," A 698 is in the same construction as A 697.

725-36. See 650-71 n., 679-81 n., and cf. viii. 319-22; xiv. 153-62; de S., 606 (xiv. A 165 n.). "Though it be" is understood before 732. On "trivial" (726) see iv. 278-306 n.

✓ 733-7. An excellent brief description of the imagination (see Chapter x), which Wordsworth ranked first of all powers (737). "Acquisitions" (737) is inexact since capacities are developed, not acquired, by education; but here, as in xiv. 209-20, Wordsworth wishes to make clear that imagination can be strengthened and modified by early training. The comma after "acquisitions" should come after "first," as in A 713. On 734-5 see xiv. 100-2 n.; on "under-sense" (735) see de S. note to xiv. A 71; on "a feeling of the whole" see ii. 221 n.

✓ 740-61. These lines are connected with viii. A 62 sq., the real beginning of viii (A 1-61 being introductory). They assert

that nature shapes the soul to majesty, an idea much like the theme of VIII: that nature fosters a lofty conception of man (see pp. 108-12 above). The passage is probably related to the imagination, which has just been described (733-7); 740-4 seems to mean that the imagination is fed by close observation of nature, breadth of view, and an accurate memory of natural objects, and that these excellences are best developed by early familiarity with nature especially in its simpler and grander forms. As to "attention" see iii. 157-69, viii. A 62-8; "comprehensiveness" seems to mean breadth, largeness of soul, and recalls 734-5, xi. A 844-8, and xiii. 48-54 (in each of these passages the imagination is referred to, as it seems to be here, and xi. A 845 mentions "comprehensive"); "memory" is probably the power of recalling both visual images and their imaginative transformation; these images yield joy and strength and furnish food for the imagination, see "Daffodils," "Tintern Abbey," 22-57, and xii. 208-335. It is noteworthy that it is those natural objects which impress us as simple and powerful (see viii. 597-607 n.), that is (as 745-9 suggest) generally those seen at a distance, which minister most to us. There is a hint here of the ministry of fear; "By principles as fixed" makes the assertion a very decided one. With 745-7 cf. de S., 558, lines 208-11. Yet *Excursion*, iii. 928-40 (quoted de S., 558) expresses what the Solitary imagined the Indian to be; the reality was very different (*Excursion*, iii. 951-5). A 721-3, the original form of which (de S., 548) was among the first part of *The Prelude* to be written, is not in the final text nor is 745-54 in A; "views and aspirations" (755) is clearer than "measure and the prospect" (i. e., capacity and outlook) of A 724.

747. Since it is the Arab, not the Indian, who roves the desert sands, the correct punctuation must be that of D<sup>2</sup> and E: a period after "Indian" and no mark after "sands."

A 716-28, variant in de S., 548. *indolence*: See vi. A 46 n. "Gave . . . mind" is parallel to "Gave . . . thoughts" two lines below. The latter line probably means stimulated his mind and gave him many thoughts.

✓ 750-6. As the sea propels, magnifies, spreads, and sends aloft, even so it shapes to majesty man's views and aspirations.

"Its shoals of life" (751) are fishes, whales, porpoises, and the like.

757-8. "Perennial" (cf. "steady," A 722) is contrasted with "changeeful." Cf. xiv. 100-1. The forms of the hills are permanent, but their appearance changes with the seasons and with sunshine, cloud, or mist.

759-60. Clearer than A 728.

761-4. The apology, which was still more wordy and repetitious before the omission of the unnecessary and not quite true A 731, was probably introduced because Wordsworth implies that he possessed the rare powers described in 733-61.

761. Cf. xiii. 19-39; "relation," connection—one thought is related to another.

761, 765. *This*: The antecedent is uncertain since several ideas are expressed in 740-61, but 767-71 indicates that Wordsworth was thinking principally of 753-61. In any case he does not refer to the joy which came to him in London from the memory of the hills and streams but, going back to 733-40, declares that the discipline of nature enabled him to see the permanent in the transitory, the one in the many, order in confusion.

765. MS X adds the alliterative "tho' then I took No note thereof"—another indication that Wordsworth was aware of reading into his early consciousness ideas which were chiefly the product of later years (see iii. 612-16 n.). "Domain," though better than "receptacle" (A 734), gives the line, already encumbered with "This did I feel," a pompous sound.

766-71. A quiet, noble conclusion, like that of iv, vi, x, xiv. "Enduring" (see i. 409 n.) is contrasted with "transitory" (770). It is unfortunate that the stuffy "Vouchsafed her inspiration" (768) was substituted for the simpler "Was present as a habit" (A 737); yet could "the Soul of Beauty" be "present as a habit"? These concluding lines are closely connected in both thought and expression with viii. A 62 sq. but the connection was later obscured by the insertion of viii. 1-69 and the omission of viii. A 64-119.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth took his degree January 21; and we learn from his letter to Mathews of June 17 that he left London about May 27, although Dorothy wrote Miss Pollard May 23 that he was then in Wales.

<sup>2</sup> The description of Bartholomew Fair (675-721) must be based chiefly, if not solely, upon Wordsworth's visit to the fair with Lamb on September 7, 1802. It is doubtful if Wordsworth was in London at this time of year before 1802.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, i. 408 and n.; vii. 621, 679-81 n., 722-30, 724 n.; viii. A 65-6, 319-22, 332-7, 433-4; xiii. 202-5; de S., pp. 547-8; *Excursion*, iii. 104; *Recluse*, i. i. 593-616; "Tintern Abbey," 25-6; "Blest is this Isle," 51-4. The *Concordance* will furnish other instances.

<sup>4</sup> *Wordsworth*, 1903, p. 52.

<sup>5</sup> Grosart, i, 322; pointed out by Legouis, trs., p. 166.

<sup>6</sup> Letter to Mathews of June 17, 1791. In a letter to the same friend of August 13, 1791, Wordsworth says that he "did little" serious reading or study in the city. On finally leaving it in 1795 he felt like "a captive . . . coming from a house Of bondage" where he "long had pined A discontented sojourner" (i. A 6-7, 7-8). His great tribute to the beauty that at times invests London, the sonnet upon Westminster Bridge, was written July 31, 1802, two years before the composition of this book.

<sup>7</sup> *Times Literary Supplement*, October 6, 1932; "Wordsworth's 'Hermitage': Racedown or Grasmere?" *Studies in Philology*, xxxii (July, 1935), 487-91.

<sup>8</sup> *Memoirs*, II, 478.

<sup>9</sup> Suggested by Dr. Adele Ballman.

<sup>10</sup> *The Later Wordsworth*, Cambridge, 1933, p. 156 n.

<sup>11</sup> *Memoirs of Bartholomew Fair*, 1859, p. 449.

## BOOK VIII

BOOK VIII resurveys the first twenty-one years of Wordsworth's life with reference to the development of his interest in man. In method, therefore, it is more like v and XII than are any of the other books, but in subject matter it is closer to XIII, which deals with the restoration of Wordsworth's faith in man. Such a study comes very properly at this place just before the account of the visit to France, which was not only the most important event in his life but the one that did most to develop his interest in humanity.

The sub-title, "Love of Nature Leading to Love of Man," which first appears in B (with "Mankind" in place of "Man"), is misleading since the book treats of the lofty conception of man, not with the love of him,<sup>1</sup> and since 495-675 have nothing to say about nature. It has been pointed out<sup>2</sup> that in *Guilt and Sorrow* and *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth emphasized the pathos of the poor and that not before 1800—in "Michael," "The Brothers," the "Prospectus" to *The Recluse*, and a little later in "Resolution and Independence"—did he emphasize their dignity, "the native grandeur of the human soul" (*Excursion*, vi. 666). In these poems as in the present book and in XIII it is humble men, chiefly shepherds, who are considered, since it was such men whom Wordsworth found closely associated with Nature. As he never got close to them he found it easier to reduce them to the abstraction, Man.

Of all the books of *The Prelude* the A version of VIII is the most loosely knit, discursive, repetitious, and leisurely—"digressive" is hardly the word since nearly all the passages are connected, if somewhat remotely, with the main theme. The structure was much improved in revision but in architectonics (never Wordsworth's strong point) VIII remains weaker even than v. The tangential and repetitious character of the book,<sup>3</sup> despite the effort that was made to relate the several passages to one another and to the general theme, will be apparent from the following outline:

1-69. The fair,—a happy human scene against a magnificent natural background.

A 62-119. Love of nature leading to love of man.

✓ 70-115. The lake country praised (cf. 124-8, 159-72, 215-22) and (75-97, 111-15) compared with "Gehol's matchless gardens."

✓ 100-28. The attractiveness of the lake country is due in part to the character of the shepherds who inhabit it; these men helped Wordsworth to love the country and the beauty of the country helped him to love the men.

129-72. The shepherds of literature and of earlier times (129-56, cf. 173-85) contrasted with those among whom Wordsworth grew up.

173-85. Pastoral life in Latin poetry (cf. 129-35).

185-215. Wordsworth himself has seen such life.

✓ 215-22. But he praises the ruggedness of the lake country (cf. 73-6, 98-172) because it seizes the heart with firmer grasp.

233-56. This is illustrated in the life of an English shepherd.

✓ 256-93. Accordingly, man as Wordsworth first saw him was ennobled by nature.

✓ 293-339. The conception of man thus formed is not a delusion; we are all introduced to knowledge through seeing the idealized before the sordid.

✓ 340-64. At first Wordsworth cared primarily for sports, later for nature, and finally for man.

✓ 365-475. Fancy increased Wordsworth's interest in man.

476-94. Wordsworth felt a sudden burst of sympathy, an awareness of One Being in all things, especially in man, which led to a sense of man's preeminence.

✓ 495-529. The contribution of Cambridge to the development of Wordsworth's interest in man.

530-675. The contribution of London to the development of Wordsworth's interest in man.

676-86. Summary.

Professor de Selincourt believes that VIII was originally composed in November, 1804,—VII, VIII, X, and XI being written between the middle of October and Christmas, 1804. A 221-310, which was later rejected, he attributes to "Oct.-Dec. 1800, when the poet was engrossed in *Michael*" (p. xxiii).



To the list of "MSS. for Bk. viii" should be added, "*for* ll. [A] 741-50 X"; and, possibly, "an earlier form of [458-75] is found in MSS V and U following ii. [A] 144."

1-69. Wordsworth sent an early version of this passage to Sir George Beaumont in June or July, 1805, because of "its standing more independent of the rest of the poem than perhaps any other part of it." Like III and IV this book opens with a picture, although in the present instance the first few lines are given over to questions and the description that follows is longer than those in III or IV and does not deal with an event in the poet's life. The contrast with Bartholomew Fair, described near the end of the preceding book (vii. 675-721), was probably not intended; nor is it certain that Wordsworth wished in these opening lines to show how Nature throws about man a grandeur not his own and so leads him to admire and cherish his fellows.

5, 8, 15-16, 21. Except for the use of "yon" and "betimes," and the substitution of 15-16 for A 14, these lines mark an improvement over the earlier texts.

12, 21, 25-6, 39, A 64, A 83. Monosyllabic lines.

32-3, 40-1. Perhaps 32-3 were substituted for A 32 because the latter did not seem clear; A 40 was wisely dropped.

48-52. *Malvern Hills*, 952-6. "The" (48) is "their" in Cottle's poem. That these lines are "a tribute to the poet's wife" (de S., 549) is clearer in the E<sup>3</sup> version of A 45-8.

59-60. Cf. Thomas Hardy's preface to *Two on a Tower*: "This slightly-built romance was the outcome of a wish to set the emotional history of two infinitesimal lives against the stupendous background of the stellar universe, and to impart to readers the sentiment that of these contrasting magnitudes the smaller might be the greater to them as men."

63. *all things serve them*: Cf. the sonnet "To Toussaint L'Ouverture," 9-12:

Thou hast left behind  
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies;  
There's not a breathing of the common wind  
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies.

The animism, of which there is a suggestion in this sonnet and

in "Loves" (64) of the present passage, is strikingly expressed in the A variant of A 55-61 (de S., 265, see Chapter v).

67. This hypermetrical line is prosodically more pleasing than A 59 and, although "prattling" is inferior to "lurking," it removes the uncertainty as to the syntax of "from" in A 59.

A 55-61, A variant (de S., 265). See Chapter v. *more . . . than aught that fabling Greece*: In his "To the Memory of . . . Shakespeare" Ben Jonson suggests that Shakespeare's comedies are greater than "all, that insolent Greece, or haughty Rome Sent forth."

✓A 62-119. Despite the interest of all these lines and the excellence of A 88-101 and A 114-19, they are omitted presumably because the general idea is that of the remainder of the book, because one of the illustrations (A 93-101) is much like an incident narrated a little later, and because they add to the confusion of a very loosely constructed book by bringing in one more passage which turns from nature description to the dignity and influence of the shepherd's life and then back to nature description. Wordsworth may also have felt that he was suggesting so much kindness and interest in man at an early age as to leave little room for development—which had not gone far when he was twenty-one. See likewise A 171-8 n.

70-3. These lines connect this book closely with the concluding paragraph of VII and so suggest that in their original form they were composed soon after the completion of VII and were intended for the opening of VIII. Both passages refer not to "the spiritual presences of absent things," as do the similar lines in "Tintern Abbey" (22-30), but to the realization of the debt to nature. The contrast between "City's" and "rural," between "turbulent" and "peace" is not in A, since most of 71-3 is a late addition.

A 65-6. Cf. 317-22, 330-9.

A 66-8. Cf. vii. 740-61 n. This is one of the most dubious claims Wordsworth makes for the influence of nature.

A 69-79.

Some there are,  
By their good works exalted, lofty minds,  
And meditative, authors of delight  
And happiness, which to the end of time

Will live, and spread, and kindle: even such minds  
 In childhood, from this solitary Being,  
 Or from like wanderer, haply have received . . .  
 That first mild touch of sympathy and thought,  
 In which they found their kindred with a world  
 Where want and sorrow were.

("Old Cumberland Beggar," 105-16)

Shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men  
 Whom I already loved;—not verily  
 For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills  
 Where was their occupation and abode.  
 And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy  
 Careless of books, yet having felt the power  
 Of Nature, by the gentle agency  
 Of natural objects, led me on to feel  
 For passions that were not my own, and think  
 (At random and imperfectly indeed)  
 On man, the heart of man, and human life.

("Michael," 23-33)

A 72. *me*: My interests and affections.

A 72-8. Cf. 121-4. A 78 appears in E after 123.

A 75. *complacency*: "Disposition or wish to please, or comply with the wishes of, others" (NED). Cf. xii. 38; *Excursion*, v. 376; and Wordsworth's letter to Dorothy of September 6, 1790.

A 77. *the Creature in himself*: Man as man?

A 78-9. "Although he was a stranger, personally unknown to me, Nature made him a brother of this world of 'Friends and youthful Playmates'" (A 74)?

A 80. *motions of delight*: The phrase is used again in xii. 9, where "motions" may perhaps have the meaning it has here and in x. 458,—emotions. The emotions are those mentioned in A 75-7.

A 81-101. There are some similarities between this account and lines 13-24 of *The Vale of Esthwaite* (P. W., *Youth*, p. 270), which was written in 1787. Although the incident here described is very like that less effectively told in 263-7, it may not be the same since this one took place when Wordsworth was "yet a very Child" (A 82) and the other when he had become "a rambling school-boy" (256). There is some like-

ness between this "sight" and that pictured in lines 31-47 of de S., 601-2, but Coleridge commented on a similar appearance, which he had observed independently:

In some of the phenomena of nature, in the mist of the mountain, the traveller beholds his own figure, but the glory round the head distinguishes it from a mere vulgar copy. In traversing the Brocken, in the north of Germany, at sunrise, the brilliant beams are shot askance, and you see before you a being of gigantic proportions, and of such elevated dignity, that you only know it to be yourself by similarity of action. In the same way, near Messina, natural forms, at determined distances, are represented on an invisible mist, not as they really exist, but dressed in all the prismatic colours of the imagination.\*

A 86. *Redounding*: Abounding. *vehement*: Overpowering.

A 88-91. *eyelet spots*: Apparently much the same as "loop-holes"; the sun struck the hills through holes in the mist. "Process": "Onward movement in space; procession; progress, progression" (NED).

A 101-19.

Waving his hat, the shepherd in the vale  
Directs his winding dog the cliffs to scale,  
That, barking busy 'mid the glittering rocks,  
Hunts, where he points, the intercepted flocks.

(*Evening Walk*, 1793, 165-8)

The first seven lines of the present passage are pedestrian in style and prolix with unnecessary detail, but 114-16 are excellent. Presumably the incident was dropped because it has no bearing on the growth of a loftier conception of man. It does, however, illustrate the point made in A 171-8 but later omitted: the inextricable blending of man and nature in the mind of the young poet.

A 111. *a Man's intelligence*: The meaning, as is clear from A<sup>2</sup>, is that the dog was directed by the intelligence of his master. "The man's" would be clearer.

A 114. *away*: Should be "a way."

A 118-19. In 471-5 a similar instance of the pathetic fallacy is cited as an illustration of fancy; the Wanderer read "unutterable love" in the faces of the clouds (*Excursion*, i. 203-5).

75-97. Although this admirable purple patch may be justified by the emphasis it gives to the idea developed in the lines

that follow, it probably owes its existence to Wordsworth's love of romance (see vii. 77-84 n.).

83-4, 90. Better than A 129-30, 136, which they displace.

86. "Sunny" is associated with "domes Of pleasure" (cf. 84-5) in "Kubla Khan," 36 and 47; "Mount" is found in "Kubla Khan," 41.

87-8. See vi. 505 n.

98-110. Cf. *Recluse*, i. i. 309-470 and "Enough of garlands."

99. *primitive*: Original; contrasted with what man had done in Gehol's gardens.

100-3. Wordsworth insists not that nature is more uplifting in the lake region than in the Orient but that it is sensuously more "delicious" because of the character of the men who inhabit it. In A 150-1, later omitted as awkward and repetitious, he speaks of the district as breathing the fragrance of humanity.

104-5. See vi. 32-3 n., iii. 355 n.

107-8. Now to individual ends, now to social. By his manner of life he was necessarily led to attend to both.

De S., 553-9. *Discussion of these lines will be found at the end of the commentary on Book VIII* (pp. 480-92 below).

111. "At an age when" (A 159) might better have been kept than "to a child" (112, A 162) since it makes clearer the point of 116-20.

114. *dance of images*: See vi. 158-60 n.

116-20. Hartley's associationalism.

118-19. The child seems not to regard [pay attention to] either man or nature.

A 171-8. Omitted from the final text because, penetrating and well phrased as are A 171-2 and interesting as are A 175-8 (note "Flow'd in by gushes"), they confuse the issue. A 101-19, which illustrate the point made in the present passage, were presumably dropped for the same reason. For Wordsworth's theme is not how love of nature blended with love of man but how nature exalted his conception of man.

A 173. *these two principles*: Implied in "the green earth" (A 166) and "human interests" (A 167).

121-4. Adapted from A 72-8 (E has A 78 after 123) to take the place of A 178-9.

125-7. Fountains which were there most abundant since Nature there dictated man's occupations. See xiii. 102 n. In place of "Nature dictated" A 181 has "Illustrated by Nature," in which "Illustrated" probably means, as elsewhere in Wordsworth, "rendered illustrious," that is, were not only "adorned" but given dignity and distinction by Nature.

129-59. Connected only indirectly with the theme of VIII: the shepherds with whom Wordsworth's admiration for man took its rise were very different from those who lived in earlier times or those described in books.

129-32 and most of 135-40 and 157-8 are not in A. With 129-32 cf. *Descriptive Sketches* (1793), 474-91; 140 is a sonorous line.

146-9. Cf. Herrick's "Corinna's Going a-Maying" and Wordsworth's own "Ode composed on May Morning," 17-22.

164-7. "Lighter graces such as the may-pole were gone (129-59), but I knew instances of danger which stirred my imagination and so [this is only implied] made me conceive of man as a noble being." Wordsworth wrote to John Wilson in June, 1802: "There cannot be a doubt that in tracts of country where images of danger, melancholy, and grandeur, or loveliness, softness, and ease prevail, they will make themselves felt powerfully in forming the characters of the people." Cf. also the V variant of v. A 472 and *Excursion*, i. 163-6:

many a tale  
 Traditionary round the mountains hung,  
 And many a legend, peopling the dark woods,  
 Nourished Imagination in her growth.

The early form of 164-5 (A 211-12), that given in Y, is revealing. See p. 48 above. Concerning the animism of 165 see xiv. 113 n. and Chapter v.

✓ A 228-43. Nowhere else in *The Prelude* is there such a roll-call of local place-names, although a number of these reappear in "Musings near Aquapendente," 30-49. Such names are usually eliminated from the final text (see i. A 287-8 n.; ix. 40-1 n.) and in the present case are meaningless and ineffectual for most readers. Yet those who are familiar with the locality will, like Wordsworth, find pleasure in recalling them. To

him they were, of all spots not in his immediate vicinity, those he saw most often, since they lie on the ridge of mountains north-east and north of Dove Cottage in the triangle between Grasmere, Brother's Water, and Thirlmere. Wordsworth's "The Cock is crowing" was composed "at the foot of Brother's Water." Near Grisedale Tarn, which lies at the head of "Grisedale's houseless Vale" (A 239,—it is still houseless), Wordsworth said good-bye to his brother John for the next to the last time (see "Elegiac Verses, John Wordsworth"). According to Knight (VIII, 225), who refers to "There is an Eminence," Arthur's Seat (A 232) is Stone Arthur.

A 241-3. Excellent lines.

A 296-7. Vivid.

A 299-300, A 302-3, A 306, A 308-9. In the main monosyllabic and unimpressive.

✓ (173-85. Notable poetry, which is connected with the subject of the present book only in the same indirect way as is 75-97. The passage is something like xi. 424-70 and different from most of Wordsworth's poetry in being classical in both manner and matter.)

181. *calmly*: "Sweetly" in A 319; see de S., xlv.

183. The omission of "the" before "Invisible" (A 321), which produces a less flowing rhythm, may be due to the initial th's in "thrilling the."

185-209. In view of 209-15, 185-6, 188, it is not unlikely that Wordsworth is here referring to the "Goldene Aue," a fertile plain in Prussian Saxony south of the Harz mountains and stretching eastward from Nordhausen. He and his sister wrote Coleridge from Nordhausen on February 27, 1799.

200-3. Neither the somewhat conventional and obvious "to . . . fife" nor the stilted "Nook is there none" and "the same" are in A 338-40.

205-6. Cf. 255-6 and vi. A 46 n.

215-22. Similar to 98-110 as 223-93 is similar to 111-63. "Powers" (218), animism, see xiv. 113 n. and pp. 21-5 above. Only the last three words of 216-18 are in A; "my native region" (218, not in A) is needed to make clear that Wordsworth is no longer speaking of Germany.

218-22. Here again Wordsworth praises bad weather (see

i. 416-18 n.), the terrifying (see Chapter III), and the lonely (see Chapter IV).

229-56. This account of the shepherds moving up the mountains in springtime has much in common with *Descriptive Sketches* (1793), 442-69, especially: "fragrant scents beneath th' enchanted tread Spring up" (*D. S.*, 448-9, cf. *P.*, viii. 241-4 and ix. 295-8), "morn . . . mid smoking dew" (*D. S.*, 454-5, cf. *P.*, viii. 244-5), "The summer long to feed from stage to stage" (*D. S.*, 457, cf. *P.*, viii. A 373-4). Furthermore,

Thence down the steep a pile of grass he throws  
The fodder of his herds in winter snows (*D. S.*, 472-3)

recalls *P.*, viii. 226-9; and the contrasted picture (*D. S.*, 474-85) of the idyllic life led "of yore" by shepherds, which follows this account, is much like the description of Arcadian pastoral life, also introduced for the sake of contrast, in two passages (*P.*, viii. 128-56, 173-85) which precede this one.

229-30. *And when the spring Looks out*: Cf. Thomson's *Winter*, 16: "Looked out the joyous Spring; looked out, and smiled."

232, 245, 248. Alliteration.

A 361-3. *and feeds . . . it*: Monosyllables, which likewise make up A 365. Most of A 360-5, 373-4 and all of A 367-8, 371 are omitted from the final text presumably because they give details that are needless or are implied in the remainder of the account. A 367 might well have been kept.

239-49. Replaces A 379-82. Except for 240-1, 243, 246 ("protending"), 249, and A 379, both versions are good, but none of the early lines is so pleasing as 244-5 and 248. The final text suggests that Philosophy might well follow the shepherd—a course which had at first seemed needless.

251-6. Cf. *The Recluse*, I. i. 358-62:

it is in truth  
A mighty gain, that Labour here preserves  
His rosy face, a servant only here  
Of the fire-side, or of the open field,  
A freeman, therefore, sound and unimpaired.

252. *lies*: Substituted for "is" (A 385); cf. "became" (280, "was like" A 414) and de S., xlv. Note also "Had . . .



looks" (261) as compared with "Seem'd . . . oft" (A 395).

255. *indolence*: Cf. 204-6 and vi. A 46 n.

256-73. Here Wordsworth returns to 215-22 and to the development and illustration of 98-128.

258. Cf. 335-6, 485-94 and n.

259. *Nature*: A personification of the external world and the forces at work in it which suggests the *anima mundi*.

260. *solitude*: Cf. Chapter iv.

A 396-7. Cf. i. 330-9. Omitted because abrupt (A<sup>2</sup> overcomes this) and because "suddenly . . . vapours" is implied in 264, which is not in A. The final text of 261-6 seems to me the best.

262-3. Cf. i. 485-90, v. 480-90. The alliteration of "trod . . . trackless" may be unconscious, or partly so.

263-7. Cf. A 81-101 n.

267-8. Clearer but more pedestrian than A 401-2, which it replaces.

267. *like Greenland bears*: i. e. huge and white.

271-3. Cf. E. A. Robinson's poem, *The Man against the Sky* (1916), and the first sight of Eustacia Vye in chapter two of *The Return of the Native*.

284. A significant comment. The dalesmen appealed to the imagination more strongly than did the colorless, idealized shepherds of pastoral literature.

288. *for the purposes of kind*: An awkward, obscure phrase, which seems to mean "from the point of view of his species," that is, "when compared with other men."

292. That is, Wordsworth knew little of the individual man and was largely indifferent to him; cf. 608-11, A 760-7 n., and see pp. 109-11 above. Similarly, it was the *idea* of Geometry and of the Church of England that appealed to him (see vi. 115-67 n.).

293. *something must have felt*: Another indication that Wordsworth was aware of a tendency in himself to read into his earlier consciousness feelings and thoughts that first came to him in later life. See iii. 612-16 n.

296-301. A kind of anti-rationalism; see Chapter vii. "Dead" is contrasted with "vital" as "letter" is with "spirit"; and, in general, reasoning about abstractions together with knowl-

edge gained from books is contrasted with the wisdom which is acquired by living.

302. *Nature*: Probably external nature; the God who made the external world and man and who adapted each to the other.

(306-8. Wordsworth's assertion that we are led to knowledge by seeing life at first not as it really is but idealized seems to me inconsistent with his praise of the rough-and-tumble experience in a public school (v. 406-25, xiv. 329-47). The idea is repeated in 317-27: Wordsworth does not say, what he may well have believed, that one *must* learn in this way, that it is the only road to truth, but that actually it is the way that, in the main, we do learn. Cf. A 760-7 and n. and "The Country Church-yard and Ancient Epitaphs" (Grosart, II, 42): "that spirit of forbearance and those kindly prepossessions, without which human life can in no condition be profitably looked at or described."

309-10, 315-16. Except for "evil" and "objects" these four lines are made up entirely of monosyllables.

328-9. Another expression of Wordsworth's love of freedom (see 251-6 and n.; vi. 32-3 n.) and of the importance freedom held in his conception of education (see v. 223-363 and notes). Lines 328-30 are substituted for A 462 and the pompous 335-6 for A 467.

275-339. There is considerable repetition here. Lines 275-83 say much the same thing as 303-5 and 315-17; 306-11 is similar to 322-7; 317-22 to 330-4.

335-6. A much stronger affirmation than A 468, for which it is substituted. Cf. 257-60, 485-94 and n.

340-56. Cf. 679-86. The three stages described here are presumably the same as those mentioned in "Tintern Abbey," 65-102, although there are important differences in the two accounts of the last period. Mr. Arthur Beatty attaches great importance to the three stages, which he thinks were derived from Hartley.<sup>5</sup> But it is a division that would naturally occur to anybody and one often made in tracing the development of painters and writers. With 342-5 compare i. 328-30, 544-8; with 345-7, ii. 48b-54a, 198-203a, 276-81; with 347b-51a, iv. 191-255, viii. 485-94.

A 471-4. See de S., xliv.

362. *first*: Greatest, not earliest.

363-4. Excellent verse; an illustration of the idea may be found in lines 31-47 of de S., 601-2.

A 497-509. Although these lines are more poetic and more pleasing than many retained in the final text, they do not advance the thought or show *how* Wordsworth came to have a lofty conception of man. Nor are they connected with what immediately precedes or directly with what follows. A 495-6 cannot be intended to apply to them since those lines refer to "beast or bird." Accordingly they must be a development of 312-17 (A 446-51). Since the thought takes a different turn at 317 and again at 340, 356, and 365, and since there are decided breaks at 340 and 365, it is confusing to revert (none too clearly) to 312-17 just before 365.

A 503, A<sup>2</sup> variant. Perhaps omitted because Wordsworth felt it was too much like Sir Egerton Brydges's sonnet, "On Echo and Silence," which was first published in 1785:

In eddying course when leaves began to fly,  
And Autumn in her lap the store to strew,  
As 'mid wild scenes I chanced the Muse to woo,  
Through glens untrod and woods that frowned on high,  
Two sleeping nymphs with wonder mute I spy!—  
And lo, she's gone!—in robe of dark green hue,  
'Twas Echo from her sister Silence flew:  
For quick the hunter's horn resounded to the sky!  
In shade affrighted Silence melts away.  
Not so her sister!—hark, for onward still  
With far-heard step she takes her listening way,  
Bounding from rock to rock, and hill to hill!  
Ah, mark the merry maid in mockful play  
With thousand mimic tones the laughing forest fill.

There is a fair chance of Wordsworth's being influenced by this sonnet since he esteemed it "above all, among modern writers." <sup>6</sup> Like Brydges he mentions two sleeping sisters, Echo and Silence, and tells how Echo is roused and runs around the hills mocking Silence. Furthermore, although Wordsworth's first two and a third lines fit in with the A 497-509 series, which describes various occupations, the remaining lines stand apart from their context like an independent stanza or incomplete

sonnet. The echo fascinated Wordsworth; see p. 142 above.

365. *that*: A demonstrative pronoun used in the sense of the well-known or universal." See ii. 260-1.

366, 373. The plainness and severity of the imagination is contrasted with the wilfulness and conceit of fancy.

A 513-21. More interesting than 368-73 but perhaps unnecessarily detailed. A 513-15a, A 518, A 521 are not in the final text and 368-9 are not in A.

A 513. *Nature's*: My nature's; "inner" is emphatic and, like "mute" (A 512), is contrasted with A 514-15.

A 515. *A visible shape*: "A visible clothing of harmonious words," D. The construction of the two lines that follow in D is not clear—"and to" seems to be needed at the beginning of them.

A 519. *those shapes of human life*: Described in A 497-509.

373. *fancy*: Coleridge and Wordsworth laid so much stress upon the imagination that they were anxious lest their readers should confuse it with the more facile, airy, and capricious manipulation of reality which they termed "*fancy*." It is strange that they had little to say about another equally important distinction, that between imagination and invention—a quality extensively illustrated in the epics of their friend Southey. Wordsworth comments on fancy in xiv. A 282-306, in his note to "The Thorn," and in his Preface of 1815; Coleridge, who presumably was the first to develop the difference between the two faculties, discusses them in the fourth and thirteenth chapters of the *Biographia Literaria* and in *Table Talk*, June 23, 1834. "Many of the poems classed by Wordsworth under the heading 'Poems of the Fancy,' are by no means distinguished chiefly by this characteristic."<sup>7</sup> Imagination has affinities with the *Vernunft*, fancy with the *Verstand*. See pp. 138-40 above. In the present passage Wordsworth points out that the adolescent boy's sentimental distortion of life and nature as well as his turning his back on reality to lose himself in a dream world both stimulated for a time his interest in nature and in man (374-6, A 583-7). Cf. ii. 386-95, iv. 231-55. *conceit*: "Fancy; fanciful opinion" (NED).

374. *Nature and her objects*: Hendiadys. Natural objects

mentioned in 377-80, 392-420. Other illustrations are given in "A Morning Exercise," 1-22.

381-3. An improvement over A 529-31, which they displace.

A 540. A good line, which was omitted probably because of its exaggeration.

392-406. More poetic as well as more closely knit than A 541-58. A 542, A 550, A 553 and most of A 551-2 are dropped; 401 is added. The earliest form of 392, that in Y, is clearer but more prosaic than that finally adopted.

406-20. See vii. 77-84 n. Ten lines shorter than A 558-82 yet nothing of value has been lost, unless it be A 571, and the passage as a whole has been improved. Yet the first line and a half are abrupt, the third line is rough with stressed monosyllables and is none too clear, and 410-13 is less natural and pleasing than A 568-71. Note the repetition of "oft," "often," "restless" in 410-13. Jacob Boehme in his twenty-fifth year was "vom Göttlichem Licht ergriffen und mit seinem gestirnten Seelengeiste durch einen jählichen Anblick eines zinnernen Gefäßes (als des lieblich jovialen Scheins) zu dem innersten Grunde oder *centro* der geheimen Natur eingeführet" (Frankenberg's life of Boehme as quoted in Alexandre Koyre's *La Philosophie de Jacob Boehme*, Paris, 1929, p. 19 n.).

414-18. Cf. ix. 446-61.

419-20. Cf. "To the Cuckoo" ("O blithe New-comer!"), especially 15-16, 23-4; "Yarrow Unvisited," 49-56; de S., 557, lines 147-8; pp. 142-3 above; and Shelley's "Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery" ("Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," 12).  
✓ 421-3. Clearer than A 582-4: the original vague impulse from the diamond light was imaginative; its conscious development into a shield, the entrance to a magic cave or fairies' palace was the work of fancy.

A 584-5. Cf. A 521; imaginative feelings seemed to the boy more valuable when developed by Fancy, in her own capricious way—the imagination is not "wilful" since it cannot do as it pleases with its material.

A 585-9. These lines, later omitted as prosaic and unnecessary, serve to remind the reader that the discussion of fancy is not a digression but an attempt to show how fancy leads to the "love of man." "This Power," like "this adulterate Power" of A 591, is Fancy.

423-6. The "busy Power" is the Fancy (cf. 413) who, as is illustrated in 384-91, 402-6, 437-43, turned the attention of "her ready pupil," Wordsworth, to what he understood least, "human passions," and so stimulated his interest in man.

A 591-6. "Of this . . . compar'd" (A 591-3) and "chance . . . such" (A 595-6) are omitted and "in the midst" (A 593) is changed in the final text, which thus escapes the pedestrian, monosyllabic style of A, as well as the egotism of "on me not wasted" (A 595).

426-32. See iii. 158-69 and n.

✓ 429-31. Cf. A 602-4, xiii. 29-39. Wordsworth's fancy might have run away with him (cf. 114-15) if his mind had not been filled with reality, with images of grand and enduring natural objects.

432. Cf. xiii. 1-10.

434. A great improvement over the cacophonous and almost monosyllabic A 606.

A 601-4a. Omitted from the final text because a wordy, feeble repetition of A 596-600. "Solid" is an unfortunate epithet to apply to images.

443-50. A romantic picture conceived by the young Wordsworth without any regard to reality. These lines continue the idea of 437b-443a. "Knew" (445), fancied.<sup>8</sup>

451-75. This incident must have had for Wordsworth a significance that none of his four versified descriptions of it communicates to the reader. To him it may have become a symbol of his first attempts to write poetry about the life around him. The earliest surviving account of it is found in *The Vale of Esthwaite*, 498-513.<sup>9</sup> 451 has "the cautious double negative," one of the worst features of Wordsworth's later style (see p. 606 below).

466. *high eastern hill*: *Hamlet*, i. i. 166.

468-75. See Marjorie L. Barstow's *Wordsworth's Theory of Poetic Diction* (Yale Studies in English, LVII, New Haven, 1917), pp. 75-83. Only 471-5 (cf. A 117-19) illustrate the workings of fancy, and even these lines, although they may indicate how fancy helped to deepen the boy's nature, are not related to the growth of his "love of man." Strangely enough, Rydal Mount, the poet's last residence, has an extended view

towards Esthwaite Lake and Hawkshead, which are only five or six miles away, so that from his bed-room on the upper floor the dying Wordsworth might have cast a look upon his "dear native regions."

476-9. Substituted for A 623-5, which is none too clear and which had to be changed because of the insertion of 451-75. "In time the power of fancy waned and of a sudden there came that marked change in my feelings which has already been described as beginning in my seventeenth year" (see ii. 386-418 and iii. 127-35). Line 479 speaks of the new feeling as a "sympathy" for all things, hence for men, and so relates it to the theme of the present book.

481. *the several frames of things*: Natural objects, such as stars, regarded as structures. Cf. i. A 128; x. 423; xiv. A<sup>2</sup> variant of A 79-83, A 417, 450.

485-94. These lines add an idea not in II or III; in view of 491-4 (A 636-9) the meaning seems to be: "I was conscious not only of the presence of one Being in all things [as mentioned in II and III] but of this Being, the godhead, as present most fully and powerfully in man." The supremacy of man (mentioned in 257-60, 335-6; de S., 558-9, lines 212-13, 239-40) is insisted upon again in x. 424-6; xiv. 256-60, A 262-8, 448-54. Cf. also

He murmurs near the running brooks  
A music sweeter than their own.

("A Poet's Epitaph," 39-40)

This idea is closely bound up with the belief in man's "creative sensibility" (ii. 245-61 n.). See de S., lviii.

486. *Outwardly, inwardly*: Externally, internally? If the meaning is "in others, in myself," A 631b-2a are tautological.

491. If, as the context suggests, this means "divine power and love," the idea is entirely different from that of A 635-6: in capability of being carried away by power and love. Yet 490, like A 634-6, attributes man's preeminence to his emotional capacity (see Chapter II).

493-4. These orthodox lines are taken without change from A.

495-675. Except in the concluding paragraph, the remainder

of the book has nothing to say of the influence of *nature* in developing a loftier conception of man. But see 676-86 n.

✓ 495-529. This very general and, in part, obscure account fails to explain how the life in Cambridge contributed to the development of a lofty conception of man. Indeed 495-517 suggest that the influence of the four university years was really in the opposite direction and that the desire to present his development as continuous led Wordsworth to distort the facts. In any case Cambridge could have stimulated his admiration for humble man (with whom this book deals) only through the contrast his professors and fellow students offered to them (see iii. 550-61). Vice and guilt receive more emphasis here than in III or IV.

A 640. *as in a dream*: Cf. iii. 30 and n.

496-7. *temporal shapes Of vice and folly*: Contrasted with the eternal shapes of nobility and grandeur (the mountains) by which he had formerly been "begirt."

499. *discriminate*: Discriminated. "I began for the first time to observe manners and characters, to analyze and discuss them with others; as a result,

Extrinsic differences, the outward marks  
Whereby society has parted man  
From man, [were stressed to the] neglect [of] the  
universal heart." (xiii. 218-20)

501. *impersonated thought*: The idealized conception of mankind which he had invested with personality. Lines 501-2 emphasize the theoretical nature of Wordsworth's "love of man."

505-9. The figure seems to be that of daylight shining through a rich, old curtain. A similar idea is expressed in 625-34; iii. 261-77. The final text omits the unnecessary A 655.

510-17. The reaction to vice pictured here is closer to that described in vii. A 412-34 than to the unawareness which in iii. A 531-9 Wordsworth says characterized his university days. See iii. A 531-41 n.; vii. A 71 n.

516-17. See vi. 505 n.

518-29. A very vague, obscure passage. A 665b-7, which is entirely different from 519b-20a, together with 524-6 and



"safety" of A 669 ("guidance" in 522!) suggest that Wordsworth tried to help a fellow student by warning him of his evil courses, and was disliked and made unhappy for his pains. "Understanding" may mean "coming to understand men and things." "Love The end [i. e. the purpose or meaning] of life" is also a baffling expression since one would expect "understand" in place of "love." Perhaps "The end of life" means simply "life."

530-675. Except for the concluding paragraph, the remainder of the book deals with the contribution that life in London made to the growth of Wordsworth's interest in man and respect for him and his achievements. Although the connection is not always obvious, each paragraph except 560-89, the cave figure, relates to this question. The argument may be too subtle and far-fetched to be convincing, especially as, aside from 645-58, nothing is said of the influence (suggested in vii. 359-65, 382-99) London must have exerted in the opposite direction,—towards lowering Wordsworth's conception of man; yet none of it is beside the point.

530-1. These lines, nobler in style than the prosaic A 677, were added in 1832 or 1839. They recall the "Ode to Duty" (written 1804), especially "Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear . . ." (41), and are in marked contrast with "played idly . . . amusement" of 533-9, which describe the earlier picture of London.

543-59. See Chapter VIII. The mystic experience here described was, for Wordsworth, so far as we know, unique. It took place in a crowd, amid "mean" surroundings,<sup>10</sup> the uninspiring nature of which is emphasized, and it was not occasioned by nature or by anything seen or heard but by an idea. It is most like the experience described in vi. 592-616 but that took its rise from the recollection in tranquility of an unusually stirring incident and one in which natural beauty had played a considerable part. This account also is clearer than any of the others in revealing how brief such experiences may be (557-8) and how very indefinite is the memory of what happens in them (553-4, A 708-9). This divine moment showed Wordsworth that the city might yield the loftiest spiritual revelations and, since it was the sense of what man

had done and suffered in London that moved him, the experience presumably increased his admiration for man, his high opinion of man's possibilities. Apparently the figure implied in 554-5 is that of power growing up within him as the weight of ages descended upon him. "Yet . . . memory" (558-9) was substituted for the pedestrian "and I . . . Remember" (A 708-9), which was already expressed in A 700-5. Here as in v. 197 one would expect "with Eternity" or "above [or "apart from"] Time."

560-89. This vivid comparison, perhaps the longest in *The Prelude*, belongs, together with the paragraph that follows (590-6), more properly in VII since both picture the impression made by London and neither is concerned with its contribution to the "love of man." Lines 568-75 are particularly good; 582b-4a are less vivid than A 731-6a but 584b-90 have fewer, better developed details and are more effective than A 736b-40. According to Nowell Smith, Antiparos, though known to the ancients as Oliaros, was not described by them but "by several modern travellers." This passage is, therefore, another instance of Wordsworth's indebtedness to books of travel (see iii. 433-44 n.).

564. *he*: Retained from A 714, although when A 710 was changed to 560 it was no longer needed. Cf. 611 n. and de S., note to A 774.

589. Eyes that can follow the suggestions of their minds. Cf. the interesting line in D between 582 and 583.

590. Between this pedestrian, monosyllabic line and 591, which is not much better, A has two that are pleasing and illuminating. With the second of these compare E<sup>2</sup> variant of vi. A 460-1.

593. A skilful condensation of the wordy A 746-7. "Fount" is not a happy figure; "arbiter" or "moulder" would be better. Even in 1804 only an Englishman would have termed London the fount of the world's destiny and chief residence of the passions.

594-5. To one who knows their history, the streets, squares, monuments, and buildings of London furnish a kind of chronicle of the passions once active in and about them. "Their home Imperial" is their official residence, as distinguished from the place in which they live.

597-607. The first three of these lines although startlingly expressed mean no more than that Wordsworth liked London because of the novelty and vividness of the impressions he received in it, and he goes on to say that these impressions broadened his outlook. By "power" (600) he means an attribute not of the will but of the intellect: "capaciousness and amplitude of mind," the reverse of the "circumscribed And narrow" (A 755-8). The strong impressions of past and present life made by London gave mental breadth to the youth who had hitherto seen little of the world of affairs. Cambridge stood for learning, and in learning he was as yet little interested; he craved the inner power which comes from amplitude of mind. In 599 as in A 754 he used "knowledge" in the sense of "learning," but when, in 1832 or 1839, he added 600-1 he overlooked this fact or understood the word in a far wider sense, for by the second "knowledge" (600) he meant "knowledge of a kind, that is, understanding of men and life."

"Power" was a favorite word with Wordsworth; he uses it and its plural over six hundred times in his poetry. The spirits with which his animism peopled the wilder parts of the country he often termed "Powers" (see xiv. 113 n., and Chapter v); Imagination is "that awful Power" (vi. 594) or "but another name for absolute power" (xiv. 190); and Solitude is "that great Power" (iv. 366). Such expressions as "thence did I drink the visionary power" (ii. 311), "visionary power Attends . . ." (v. 595-6), "the hiding-places of man's power" (xii. 279) are common; and he tells us that nature is most potent "where appear Most obviously simplicity and power" (vii. 743-4), that she makes all "subservient . . . To the great ends of Liberty and Power" (xii. 134-9), that *The Prelude* is chiefly a record of "intellectual power" (xii. 44-5), and that its author, who wished his own work to be "a power like one of Nature's" (xiii. 309-12), found verse "a passion, and a power" (v. 555-6). See also ii. 324, 362; iii. 173, 366; iv. 166; v. 425, 508-9; viii. 258, 491, 554-5, 631; x. 457; xii. 268-9; de S., 600, last line; 602-4, lines 57, 88; "Essay, supplementary to the Preface" (*Oxf. W.*, p. 952, "Every great poet . . . has to call forth and to communicate *power*"); and de S. note to v. A 219-22. De Quincey's emphasis on the literature of power

as opposed to the literature of knowledge (de S., 527-8) was derived from Wordsworth.

"Nothing . . . influence" (A 755-6) is not in the final text nor is 600-3 in A, which is clearer without it; 604-6 is better than A 756-8 and 599-600 is a distinct improvement over the wordy A 753-5. A 753 is monosyllabic as, except for "present," is A 752.

602. *her*: Knowledge's.

603. *fits of kindest apprehensiveness*: Periods of sympathy that were favorable to gaining understanding.

604-6. Cf. de S., 557, lines 171-83; *Recluse*, "Prospectus," 62-71; and iii. A 110-20.

✓ A 760-7. Wordsworth's "amplitude of mind" was such that he found his joy and his dignity in conceiving of all men of all ages as a single Spirit (see ii. 221 n.), a Spirit which, although "far diffus'd," is not The Divine since it is spoken of as "living in time and space" (A 763). This transcendental conception was produced, we are told, in a boy of twenty-one by the impact of external nature on what he found within himself and in books. Wordsworth seems not to have been conscious that his disregard of the individual (A 762), his simplification and generalization of the men he had seen (it is doubtful if he had much intimate acquaintance with shepherds) led to idealization and falsification (cf. 275-339) and was inconsistent with his belief "that there is no necessity to trick out or to elevate nature."<sup>11</sup> In the final text the passage is perhaps less clear and certainly less transcendental: A 763 is changed, and 612-15 is substituted for A 764-7.

611. "With aid . . ." cannot modify "Diffused" or "felt" (608) but must depend upon some such expression as "as I learned." Apparently Wordsworth did not notice that the omission of "the external . . . conception" (A 765-7) left the phrase dangling and unintelligible. Cf. 564 n.

612. *monuments*: "Vanished nations" (615) indicates that Stonehenge and similar circles of stones (there is one near Keswick), dolmens, and menhirs are meant. The makers of these mysterious and "sublime" (614) monuments were, like the Londoners Wordsworth met, parts of the one human spirit he revered.

617-64. This paragraph affirms that London contributed in three ways to Wordsworth's lofty conception of man: it showed him (1) that man had greatly achieved and endured in the past; (2) that the imagination, a faculty for which he had the highest regard but which he had hitherto associated chiefly with nature, found in the metropolis "no uncongenial element"; (3) that human nature seen at its worst could not shake his "trust In what we *may* become."

617-25. Wordsworth's indifference to history as history comes out most clearly in ix. 204-8 but is also expressed in ix. 167-80; xii. A 90-1; and xi. 321-33 n. On the other hand, i. 166-220 and de S., 503 should not be forgotten. Much of Wordsworth's enthusiasm for the French Revolution was due to his seeing in it the lofty idealism of Plutarch's heroes; see ix. 408-17 n. The only history that appealed to Rousseau or the young Southey was that of Greece and Rome.)

618. *popular*: "Constituted or carried on by the people" (NED). Wordsworth presumably had in mind "Senatus populusque Romanus."

620-1. The harshness (A 772) of English history (which lacked the "fine moral effects" of Plutarch) could be rendered harmonious (that is, interesting and significant) only by pictures of customs and manners and by incidents which revealed these or the daily life and habits of mind of the people—"human interest" stories (cf. xiii. 106-13). Such pictures and incidents were ignored in the English histories of Wordsworth's youth—Hume's (the most popular), Robertson's, Macpherson's, Smollett's, Goldsmith's—which, being mainly political and military, were of little interest to him.

622-5. Clearer in A, partly because of the omission of A 778 from the final text: historical associations had contributed little to Wordsworth's enjoyment of places.

625-8. Cf. 505-9, iii. 261-77. "Thought" (628) is emphatic: the impression was not merely a matter of sensation and emotion.

631-2. *natures*: Entities, beings. Wordsworth was prone to think of abstractions and natural forces as beings. Yet, since in A 785 "nature" is in the possessive case, he may have intended to write "nature's": I found in London the same

majesty and power that I had found in the mountains, where nature is independent of man. Concerning "power" see 597-607 n.

A 785-9. Omitted from the final text. Scenes and incidents of the poet's earlier life were recalled by what he saw in London and the two blended and were transformed into spiritual ministrations.

633. *impregnations*: Explained in A 799.

637-8. A beautiful line and a half. See i. 82-5 n.

A 797-9. Much of this is not in the final text just as, except for parts of 640-1, 640-3 is not in A. "Imagination" is the subject of "tried" and of "simplified," "arranged," and "Impregnated." "These objects" is understood as the object of "simplified" and "arranged." The comma after "strength" should be after "objects."

641. The imagination adapts itself to the new objects or bends them to its needs. Cf. Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, section corresponding to II. xiii of *De Augmentis Scientiarum*:

And therefore it [poesy] was ever thought to have some participation of divineness, because it doth raise and erect the mind, by submitting the shews of things to the desires of the mind; whereas reason doth buckle and bow the mind unto the nature of things.

642. As the imagination is not necessarily the servant of the heart and as Wordsworth's emotional life was presumably quiescent while he was in London, this line, which was added in 1832 or 1839, probably means no more than "as I wished."

✓ 643. Imagination moves swiftly in the service of reason, which follows more slowly, verifying and correcting what the imagination has done. As A 798-9 and vii. 722-36 affirm, the "blank confusion" of the city—which to the analytical and logical reason is "an unmanageable sight"—is reduced to order and has its significance revealed by the imagination.

✓ 645-64. Wordsworth does not say that he was able to reconcile the vice and misery of London (which are referred to again in 669-70) with his previously-formed conception of man, but that they could not overthrow this conception or convince him that he was a mere dreamer. This fact may, however, prove

not the soundness of his belief but the stubbornness with which he held it. There can be no certainty as to "what we *may* become" without a clear recognition of what many of us are. Observe that "often" of A 804 is moderated to "sometimes" in 648.

665-75. Cf. A 760-7; ii. 221 n.; X variant of vii. A 432-4; vii. 726-7; and xiii. 216-20. Wordsworth does not say *how* the unity of man is set forth in the city but he may have thought that shepherds are, materially and spiritually, more independent and individualistic, city dwellers more cohesive and, in their daily existence, more dependent upon one another, that the distance between the shepherds' cottages leads to spiritual isolation and a lack of sociability. He may likewise have felt that one who lives in the country is conscious of individuals and of differences while one who sees multitudes tends to regard differences—even when they extend to "ignorance and vice"—as relatively unimportant and all persons as much alike, members of the same family. Yet it is not invariably but "often-times" (666) that the city sets forth the unity of man. *The Recluse*, I. 1. 597-616 declares that for the man "by the vast Metropolis immured . . . neighbourhood serves rather to divide Than to unite." It will be recalled that an important function of the imagination is the perception of unity in diversity and that it is only through the imagination that one "sees the [many] parts [of a city] As parts, but with a feeling of the whole" (vii. 735-6). We have just been told that in the city Wordsworth's "young imagination found No uncongenial element" (639-43, A 796-9) and it may well be that he had in mind something more transcendental than what I have suggested.

671-2. Fundamentally we all see alike in moral matters as we do with our physical eyes. Cf. *Excursion*, iv. 800-10.

(A 830-5. When strongly conscious of this sense of union. (or of communion with others) the soul reaches her highest joy, for the unity of men rests on the One Life which is diffused through them and when the soul is most alive to this unity she is likewise most aware of her kinship with the divine. The soul passes through all nature, through which the One Life is likewise diffused (ii. A 429-30), to the One Life itself. This passage is very close to xiv. 113-18:

the highest bliss  
That flesh can know is theirs—the consciousness  
Of [by] Whom they are habitually infused.

Light on the meaning of "destiny" in the earliest (Y) form of A 834-5 may be gained from vi. 604-5. A 830-5 is quite orthodox—A 835 implies the transcendence of the Deity—but, since *The Excursion* had been widely criticized for pantheism and even irreligion, and since as the years passed Wordsworth was increasingly anxious not to give offense to worthy but unduly conservative or intellectually timid folk, he changed it for 672-5, which exhibits much less religious and poetic fervor but which could not give offence. Note the substitution of "idea" (673) for "sensation" (A 831) and "feeling" (A 834), on which see the de S. notes to xii. A 235; xiv. A 183 (de S., 594, 607).)

A 836-58. Cf. xiii. 110-15. "Affectingly set forth" (667,—not "clearly," it should be observed) suggests that this picture was originally intended as an illustration of "the unity of man." The tender solicitude, the "unutterable love," which the brawny and probably illiterate artisan has for his child show that "the Colonel's Lady an' Judy O'Grady Are sisters under their skins." The incident also makes clear how life in London may contribute to "more elevated views Of human nature"; the transfer to VII may have been due to the desire to relieve the unfavorable picture of city life given in that book. But see Chapter VI, note 53.

A 840. *set off by foil*: "Nor in the glistering foil Set off to the world" ("Lycidas," 79-80).

✓ A 841-2. Wordsworth's profound reserve, his matter-of-factness, and his preoccupation with the sublime have concealed from many that he was a man not only of strong passions (see iv. 316-19 n.) but of an emotional nature. He "passionately loved" a boyish friend (ii. 333-4) and seems to have been warmly attached to Robert Jones (vi. 323 n.). He wrote Dorothy, "Oh my dear, dear sister with what transport shall I again meet you, with what rapture shall I again wear out the day in your sight. I assure you so eager is my desire to see you that all obstacles vanish. I see you in a moment running or rather flying to my arms."<sup>12</sup> He betrayed "unconquerable



agitation" if his son William was ailing and had "not courage to think" of what the loss of his sister would mean to him.<sup>13</sup> Two of the severest shocks of his life were the deaths of his brother John and his daughter Dora. Rogers declared, "Few know *how* he loves his friends."<sup>14</sup>

One of his earliest poems is a "Sonnet on seeing Helen Maria Williams weep," in which he refers to his "swimming eyes"; when a young man in London he was "most passionately moved," even to "sobs and tears" by the theatre (vii. 470-6); he wept on seeing the grave of his former teacher, at parting from Coleridge, and at the reading of *Paradise Lost* and *Henry V*;<sup>15</sup> and in referring to Coleridge's return from Malta he mentions "the first mingling of our tears" (xiv. 427). He wept at the death of a dog, "scarcely could . . . refrain from tears of admiration at the sight of" the Jardin des Plantes, said on the death of Sarah Hutchinson, "I write through tears," and told Miss Fenwick, "Your generosity to Wm . . . overpowered me even to the shedding of tears."<sup>16</sup> To the French Revolution he was at first indifferent because it failed to arouse his affections (ix. 106-7) but later, "tears . . . dimmed [his] . . . sight, In memory of the farewells of that time" (ix. 269-70) and his "heart Was oftentimes uplifted" by a face in a crowd—"a stranger and beloved as such." Spectacles like these seemed "arguments sent from Heaven" (ix. 275-83), for

still I craved  
An intermingling of distinct regards  
And truths of individual sympathy  
Nearer ourselves.

(xiii. 110-13)

As a young man he shared the eighteenth-century tendency to regard sensibility as an evidence of virtue, and in his mature theory of life he gave the emotions a very important place (see Chapter II and pp. 215-18, 237, 468 above) and held that with love gone "we are as dust" (xiv. 168-70, cf. xiii. 106-15). See also ii. 255 n., 387-418 n.; iv. 316-19; ix. 74-80 n., 106-7 n., 354-63 n., 357-60 n.; x. 417-20 n.; xii. A 134-7 n.

A 843-8. See p. 27 above.

676-86. A pleasing conclusion. Lines 676-9 summarize the teaching of this book; 679-82 furnish a transition to 683-6,

which repeat the idea of 340-56: in the scales of Wordsworth's affections nature still outweighed man. The book accordingly begins and ends on the same note: nature. There is a suggestion in 679-82 that even in Cambridge and London Nature was mysteriously leading him to man. Lines 683-4 are an improvement on the uninspired A 866-7, the second of which is monosyllabic.

De S., 553-9

## THE MINISTRY OF WONDER

All Divinity Is love or wonder.

Donne, "A Valediction: of the booke"

I grieve not that ripe Knowledge takes away  
 The charm that Nature to my childhood wore,  
 For, with that insight, cometh, day by day,  
 A greater bliss than wonder was before.

Lowell, "I grieve not that"

"I have learnt nothing from life," wrote Omar Khayyam, "except my own amazement at it." . . . I also should wish to pass to my urn, as I passed from my cradle, in the glow of constant astonishment. . . . I refuse to allow the sense of wonder to shrivel in my soul.

Harold Nicolson, *The Spectator*, December 15, 1939

This is the longest of the passages printed for the first time by Professor de Selincourt; that given on pages 600-5, which contains much better poetry, has less than half as many lines. Aside from the ideas expressed, it is of considerable interest as a piece of Wordsworth's unrevised verse (which that on pages 272, 274, 276, 592-4, and 600-5 are not). For the first draft of an argument it is well done: less wordy, vague, and repetitious than some of the poet's finished work, with bits of good imagery and admirable phrasing (e. g., 24-7, 51, 64-5, 77, 109). Yet it makes clear how much Wordsworth's verse gained from the laborious revision to which he subjected it and how mistaken is the conception, which Arnold seems to have held, that it is chiefly "when he seeks to have a style" that Wordsworth "falls into ponderosity and pomposity."<sup>17</sup> For both the style and the language of this uncorrected piece of relatively direct and unpretentious exposition reveal these defects: "fluid element" (33), "cerulean firmament" (43), "attestations new of growing life" (80), "Transcripts that do but mock their archetypes" (186), "what finds he there to this Fram'd answerably" (196-7), and

Then doth an after transport, to the first  
 Succeeding lawfully, nor less intense,  
 Attend the Child.

(21-3)

Although the subject was one that Wordsworth held vital, especially to poetry, it was the conscious mind rather than "the brooding soul" or the imagination that produced these lines. They represent not poetry but the material out of which poetry might have been made. Unfortunately the obscurities which revision would have removed are greatly increased by the mishaps that have befallen the manuscript. For so many words are now illegible or uncertain that not only the meaning of certain passages<sup>18</sup> but the general purport of the whole and its connection with what has gone before are in question. (Professor de Selincourt may accordingly be right in believing that the chief intent of these pages is to show "how the human associations of Nature fasten imperceptibly upon the child's mind" and how "love and admiration for Nature prepare the way for love and admiration of Man" (551, 552).) Yet it is noteworthy that in the first 193 of these 240 lines nothing is said about human associations or the love of man; and that in 194-213 the youth whose development we are following is pictured as turning in disgust from man to nature. If we had only these first 213 lines, it would not have occurred to anyone that they trace the growth of interest in mankind. The meaning would then, indeed, be immediately apparent but for the somewhat unusual sense in which the word "admiration" is employed. That it cannot have its more familiar meaning will be seen as soon as that meaning is applied to lines 30 to 119. (For in what sense does the child "admire" an echo, frozen water, an "arch of stones in air Suspended," an ever-flowing river, the fish that lives in the element that would drown men, lightning, rain, "storm implacable," "dwarfs, giants, genii . . . desert wastes of sand," snakes, or burning mountains?) Clearly "admiration" here means what in line 38 is called "thoughtful wonder" and in 48, "astonishment." It has this same sense in the description of the objects which the Solitary sees in the clouds: "implements of ordinary use, But vast in size . . . forms uncouth of mightiest power For admiration and mysterious awe."<sup>19</sup> Such implements would hardly excite admiration in the usual sense. The word has a like meaning in a passage (de S., 594) which affirms that the follower of nature will be controlled by "salutary awe" and, instead of being mastered

by capricious fancy, will regulate "his notions of the beautiful and grand":

In him will admiration be no weak  
 Fantastic quality that doth betray  
 Its owner, but a firm support, a source  
 Perennial of new faculties and powers.

"Admiration" is also used as practically synonymous with "wonder" in xiv. A 61 and in some lines that originally formed part of "Michael":

. . . in his thoughts there were obscurities,  
 Wonder, and admiration, things that wrought  
 Not less than a religion in his heart. (Knight, viii, 230)

If we turn now to the first 194 lines it will be clear that they trace the development of admiring or thoughtful wonder and its ministry to the mind and spirit. For the adult no less than the child is "brac'd, startled into notice, lifted up As if on plumes" (24-5) by wonder. It is "thoughtful wonder" which "give[s] the mind its needful food" (38-9) and "appease[s] the absolute necessities That struggle in us" (82-3). When these necessities are unappeased we cease to rejoice in the spirit of life that is in us, the heavens become "a blue vault merely," we see "one old familiar likeness over all" (141-2), and something very simple and universal and precious dies. This tragedy is mentioned in the last book of *The Prelude* as a result of the tendency

Of use and custom to bow down the soul  
 Under a growing weight of vulgar sense,  
 And substitute a universe of death  
 For that which moves with light and life informed.  
(xiv. 157-61)

We are there told that "fear and love" are the enemies of this tendency and that "fear" is associated with "sublime . . . forms," with "pain" and with "grandeur" (xiv. A 143-50)—which brings us back to the "grandeur and . . . tenderness," the "admiration and . . . love" with which the passage before us begins. In this passage, as in that in xiv, we find wonder associated with fear since among "Nature's unfathomable works" mention is made of "objects of fear," "lightning and

the thunder's roar, Snow, rain and hail, and storm implacable" (51-4). Evidently we have in wonder another of those forces, by most persons disliked or ignored, which Wordsworth thought essential for developing the higher faculties of man—forces which are the vitamins, as it were, of the spirit. They include solitude, loneliness, darkness, and awe, as well as fear and wonder; they are associated with mystery, with the sense of infinitude, and with nature; they are the basis of Wordsworth's strong anti-rationalism.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, it is hard to say what without them nature would have meant to him. They stimulated his imagination, they had a part in his mystical experiences, and thus were the paths leading to the hiding places of his power.

With wonder he had already dealt concretely and eloquently in connection with "the wishing cap Of Fortunatus" and the *Arabian Nights* (v. 341-6, 460-533); it was tales of wonder that called from him the famous lines

Our childhood sits,  
Our simple childhood, sits upon a throne  
That hath more power than all the elements. (v. 507-9)

One reason for his glorification of childhood is that childhood is preeminently the age of wonder.<sup>21</sup> If "the echo, rainbow, cuckoo, and glowworm all haunt Wordsworth's poetry as they haunted his mind from childhood,"<sup>22</sup> it is because these phenomena, these objects, appealed to his sense of wonder, to the fascination which the magical and inexplicable continued to have for him. "And for all poets," he might have added, for he was undoubtedly of Coleridge's opinion:

The poet is one who carries the simplicity of childhood into the powers of manhood; who, with a soul unsubdued by habit, unshackled by custom, contemplates all things with the freshness and the wonder of a child. . . . What is old and worn-out, not in itself, but from the dimness of the intellectual eye, produced by worldly passions and pursuits, he [the poet] makes new.<sup>23</sup>

In the first 124 lines of the passage before us Wordsworth traces the growth and gradual dulling of the sense of wonder in the average individual. At first the child delights in any object that appeals to the senses; later the element of thought enters—curiosity as to the cause of things; still later fear makes

itself felt. But in a few years familiarity breeds indifference; the child ceases to question and acquiesces in the belief that the things at which he formerly wondered are miracles, that "they are so because God willed it" or "God made them so." His earlier animistic belief that each natural object or force is a kind of person fades and nature's ceaseless marvels are accepted as a matter of course. For a time, however, books take their place: fairy tales, stories of impossible adventures, and, later, accounts of travels into strange lands. Apparently what comes next is the development of fancy (treated in 365-475 of the present book), which leads to delight in the bizarre, the fantastic, the unnatural. It is in this state that most men pass their maturity: only strong sensations, striking contrasts, or unnatural sights can rouse their dulled and dying sense of wonder.

Wordsworth now turns to

The child, by constitution of his frame,  
And circumstances favour'd from the first. (125-6)

Such a child apparently passes through all the stages just enumerated in the development of wonder but with differences that are not made clear. To him, however, nature never becomes commonplace and the vagaries of fancy are but harmless eccentricities, a stage in his growth. For he does not stop where most men do and his sense of wonder has not dulled as the years have passed. As a boy he is careless of nature and centered in himself, but in time nature becomes the center and soul of his being—a living thing, fascinating in its mystery. Later, when the world of thought attracts him, it is fused with his love of nature (148-58). He now turns back to the questions that troubled him as a child, but in this season of second birth authority can no longer "hoodwink His intuitions" and make him content with explanations that do not explain (158-67). He realizes that the universe and his mind are each worthy of the other and each fitted to the other. For the universe is not dead but instinct with Being (169-94).

If, in this stage of his development, he looks upon man he sees only what is sordid, transient, ignoble; hence he cleaves to nature (194-213). Obviously this last is a mistaken view;

wonder cannot do all. To right the balance the young man needs the help of the other force mentioned in the opening lines, tenderness or love. The final paragraph is accordingly devoted to showing how that power, without which there can be no lasting grandeur (xiv. 168-70), brings the growing boy to right reason and rounds out his development. Undoubtedly this paragraph is vague, disproportionately brief, and inconclusive, but it was unrevised and its unsatisfactory character may well have caused the rejection of the entire passage. For there is every reason to suppose that, with no more labor than many other parts of the poem received, these first 213 lines might have become a significant addition to the study of the poet's mind. But the final paragraph was different; it dealt with a large, important subject which was the theme of the present book and which was treated from another point of view in XIV. It may well be that the poet whose "will never governs *his* labours"<sup>24</sup> could not bring himself to develop this matter in a way that would satisfy him and would fit the whole into the completed eighth book. Nor could he use the first 213 lines by themselves since they left the young man at an unfortunate stage of his development—scorn of his fellow men.

This scorn may have troubled him on another account since apart from it the growth of the favoured child parallels Wordsworth's own. He had known the ministry of fear, he had at first been indifferent to nature, he had loved tales of impossible adventure and, later, books of travel, he had fallen under the spell of fancy, he had resolved "into one great faculty Of being bodily eye and spiritual need" (153-4), he had turned back to ponder the intuitions and perplexities of childhood, he had come to see the universe as a living thing equal to his highest aspiration and fitted to his mind as his mind was to it. Finally, with him, too, the development of "tender sympathies" (222) came considerably later than responsiveness to wonder and fear (xiv. 232-66, where the word "tenderness" is used, viii. 340-56). Can it be that for a time he, like the favoured child, had looked upon man as "sordid . . . Ignoble and deprav'd" (197-9)? See xi. 183-5 n.

Several other considerations may have influenced Wordsworth's rejection of this passage. For one thing, in the first



five lines "admiration" may be taken in the usual sense, whereas in the pages that follow it certainly means wonder. Then, too, lines 168-213 deal with the ministry of nature and do not mention "admiration." Again, the treatment of the subject is limited to childhood and youth, or early manhood; nothing is said as to the higher and less obvious ministry of wonder, as to what it does for the adult. Finally, there is no reference to man himself as an object of wonder: his body and his mind, his creative powers, his capacity for love, self-denial, and endurance. Yet Wordsworth speaks elsewhere of "that superior mystery Our vital frame, so fearfully devised"; he exclaims, "O Heavens! how awful is the might of souls," and "Oh! mystery of man, from what a depth Proceed thy honours"; he declares that Chaos, Hell, and aught else of which man may dream cannot breed such fear and awe as the mind of Man.<sup>25</sup> The poet must, therefore, have found these pages far from satisfactory: confused in what they do, inadequate because of what they fail to do.

The idea presented in them is much like that of Tennyson's "Flower in the Crannied Wall," which however is chiefly concerned with the immanence of all in everything. There is similarity also to Whitman's swaggering assertion,

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work  
of the stars,  
And the pismire is equally perfect, and a grain of sand,  
and the egg of the wren . . .  
And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of  
infidels. ("Song of Myself," section 31)

Wordsworth, however, is speaking not of a belief but a feeling, not of marvels themselves but of their ministry to the child's spirit. He is therefore closer to Carlyle's conception:

He [Teufelsdröckh] deals much in the feeling of Wonder; insists on the necessity and high worth of universal Wonder; which he holds to be the only reasonable temper for the denizen of so singular a Planet as ours. 'Wonder,' says he, 'is the basis of Worship: the reign of wonder is perennial, indestructible in Man . . .'. That progress of Science, which is to destroy Wonder, and in its stead substitute Mensuration and Numeration, finds small favour with Teufelsdröckh.<sup>26</sup>

Newman attacked this idea as leading to pantheism, as centering our attention, as it undoubtedly does, on God's works not on God himself.<sup>27</sup> Irving Babbitt likewise attacked it for its romanticism, romantic wonder consisting, as he believed, in "emphasis on the element within him [man] and without him that is associated with novelty and change." Mr. Babbitt goes on to say:

In direct proportion as he [man] turns his attention to the infinite manifoldness of things he experiences wonder; if on the other hand he attends to the unity that underlies the manifoldness and that likewise transcends him, he experiences awe. As a man grows religious, awe comes more and more to take the place in him of wonder.<sup>28</sup>

If Mr. Babbitt had found keener delight in the beauty of the external world he would probably not have been so confident on this point. Certainly Wordsworth was one in whom the sense of wonder, of "the infinite manifoldness of things," was strong; but he was also possessed of a deep craving for the permanent and abiding and for "the unity that underlies the manifoldness."<sup>29</sup> He was religious, he had a deep sense of awe, but he likewise felt and valued wonder. "There are, of course," Watts-Dunton remarked, "different kinds of wonder."

Primitive poetry is full of wonder—the naïve and eager wonder of the healthy child. It is this kind of wonder which makes the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* so delightful. The wonder of primitive poetry passes as the primitive conditions of civilisation pass. And then for the most part it can only be succeeded by a very different kind of wonder—the wonder aroused by a recognition of the mystery of man's life and the mystery of nature's theatre on which the human drama is played—the wonder, in short, of Aeschylus and Sophocles.<sup>30</sup>

It is with the "naïve and eager wonder of the healthy child" that the present passage in the main deals. Wordsworth touches on the more philosophic wonder elsewhere,<sup>31</sup> but he nowhere treats it adequately. What he felt about its ministry may, however, be inferred from what we know of his purpose in composing the *Lyrical Ballads*:

Mr. Wordsworth [Coleridge writes] . . . was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the

mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which, in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand.<sup>32</sup>

This, it may be recalled, is much the same service as Shelley believed was performed by poetry:

It purges from our inward sight the film of familiarity which obscures from us the wonder of our being. It compels us to feel that which we perceive, and to imagine that which we know. It creates anew the universe, after it has been annihilated in our minds by the recurrence of impressions blunted by reiteration.<sup>33</sup>

2-3. Cf. i. 302; vi. 746-8.

6-54. Presumably these lines reflect the proud and delighted observation that the entire household gave to Wordsworth's first two children, one of whom was about three months and the other about seventeen months old when these lines were composed. Coleridge had previously said and written much about his children's reactions to sights like these.

28, 35. Are the illegible words "myriad" and "Become"? 37-9. Cf. ii. 175-7.

44-6. Cf. "Essay upon Epitaphs" (*Oxf. W.*, p. 928, "Never did a child . . . influx?").

55-8. In view of 58b-62 "miracle" seems to have its literal, religious meaning and to be emphatic. "Produce," the things mentioned in 37-51.

67. Are the illegible words "To inanimate objects"?

69. The first edition of de S. had, by mistake, a period instead of a comma after "loth."

70-1. The child comes to realize that there are other kinds of existence than our own and no longer attributes conscious personality to the waterfall, the tree, the wind. Although the young Wordsworth doubtless fell into this variety of animism, *The Prelude* contains no account of his doing so, the nearest approach to it being ii. 386-418 and iii. 127-35, which describe his awareness of the one Presence, the One Life in all things.

80-3. "Attestations," "impressions," and "thought" seem

to be the subject of "come." With 82-3 compare v. 506-7, which also refers to romances and the like.

120-1. Cf. ii. 260-5; contrast xiv. 101-6.

133-9. The repetition of "centre" and "soul" is introduced in order to contrast "his own person" (133) with "Nature" (139).

139-44. Cf. ii. 361-2; xiv. 157-62.

147-8. Delight in intellectual pursuits rather than in mystery for its own sake, as in viii. 419-20.

153-5. He makes from his observation of nature and from his spiritual craving one faculty, by the aid of which he "converses" with the world about him. Eye and mind (or heart) are wedded for the understanding of life and of the universe.

156-8. That is, from zenith to nadir. With Wordsworth "abyss" is likely to imply what is mysterious and important, as in vi. 594, xiv. 72. In the present instance it recalls "earth, the great abyss" (*Excursion*, vii. 712).

162-7. Contrast 55-62 and compare *Mark*, x. 14-15: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. . . . Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."

171-5. Cf. viii. A 755-9 and *The Recluse*, "Prospectus," 63-8.

176. Is the missing word "discerns" or "observes"?

183. *his proper*: His own.

183-9. The universe is not dead, a mere record of a former activity of God, a mere copy of true being [apparently referring to Plato's theory of ideas, see ninth line of addition in MS V to v. A 472], but is alive and is not decaying from a former golden age. "Primary and independent" (187) are used loosely and for the sake of contrast since Wordsworth believed that One Life pervaded all things.

206. *brotherhood*: Either the brotherhood of man or, continuing the figure of 203-5, he is not even one of the brotherhood of monks or priests of nature but is alone.

213. See 239-40; viii. 485-94 n.

216, 222, 237. "mild humanities," "tender sympathies," and "gracious charities" apparently mean much the same thing as "tenderness" and "love" in lines 2 and 3.

214-40. In view of 194-213 followed by the "yet" of 214, in view also of 215-16 and of the theme of VIII, it seems likely that Wordsworth intended in this paragraph to outline the growth of affection for man. In reality he did nothing of the kind since, with the dubious exception of "humanities" (216), the lines do not refer to man or imply any feeling for him. What they do sketch is the development of a general sympathy and tenderness of heart which would doubtless extend to man.

222-4. Cf. II. A 237-60.

229. Cf. VII. 449-57.

232-3. Fear again.

237-40. To develop in each of the senses those tender sympathies with the external world until they become habits. Except for the emphasis on tenderness and on the senses this is much the same idea as the wedding of "the discerning intellect of Man . . . to this goodly universe In love and holy passion" proclaimed in *The Recluse*, "Prospectus" (47-55). Unless the universe is so wedded it is valueless even to its Maker.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See pp 108-12 above

<sup>2</sup> By F. E. Pierce in *Currents and Eddies in the English Romantic Generation*, New Haven, 1918, p. 65

<sup>3</sup> This may be due to the way the lines were originally composed. Possibly a number of the parts were at first written as independent bits or were connected with other passages than those to which they are now joined.

<sup>4</sup> Collier's report of Coleridge's ninth lecture on Shakespeare, 1811-12, *Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism*, ed. Raysor, Cambridge, Mass., 1930, II, 163.

<sup>5</sup> *William Wordsworth, his Doctrine and Art*, University of Wisconsin Studies, 2 ed., 1927, chapters v, vi. Miss A. E. Powell, on the other hand, finds nothing "distinctively Hartleian in Wordsworth's theory of the 'three ages'" (*The Romantic Theory of Poetry*, 1926, p. 128 n.).

<sup>6</sup> Letter to Alexander Dyce of spring(?), 1833.

<sup>7</sup> J. Shawcross, edition of *Biographia Literaria*, II, 293. The introduction to this edition contains an extended discussion of the two terms. See also Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, III, II, chapter III, "Of Imagination Penetrative," I. A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism*, 1930, pp 192 and n., 239-53, and Coleridge on Imagination, 1934. Shawcross (*loc. cit.*, I, 226) and Raysor (*Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism*, I, 212 n.) have shown that Coleridge did not derive the distinction from Richter's *Vorschule der Aesthetik*.

<sup>8</sup> This note, like that to 594-5, was suggested to me by J. Q. Wolf, Jr.

<sup>9</sup> P. W., *Youth*, p. 281. This was written in the spring and summer of 1787, shortly before he left Hawkshead for the university.

<sup>10</sup> On "trivial" (545) see iv. 278-306 n.

<sup>11</sup> Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (*Oxf. W.*, p. 938). "Nature," as is clear from the context, is here used in the sense of human nature.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted by Dorothy in her letter to Jane Pollard of July 10, 1793.

<sup>13</sup> Dorothy's letter to Mrs. Clarkson of June 28, 1815; William's letter to Crabb Robinson of April 26, 1829.

<sup>14</sup> Robinson's letter to Wordsworth of March 19, 1840, in *Correspondence of H. C. Robinson with the Wordsworth Circle*, Oxford, 1927, p. 403; cf. *ibid.*, 704.

<sup>15</sup> x. 543-4, Coleridge's letter to Poole of May 5, 1799 (*Harper*, I, 372-3); Dorothy's Journal of February 2 and May 8, 1802.

<sup>16</sup> "Tribute to the Same Dog," 21-2; letter to Lord Lonsdale of October 7, 1820; letter to Crabb Robinson of June 24, 1835; letter to Isabella Fenwick of October 19, 1846.

<sup>17</sup> "Wordsworth," *Essays in Criticism*, second series. Arnold's remark does apply to some of the later additions to *The Prelude*, the ponderosity and pomposity of which arise from the desire to give an impressiveness to passages untouched by passion or imagination; but with Wordsworth even more than with most men, simplicity, ease, and naturalness were achievements rather than gifts.

<sup>18</sup> For example, 124-37, certain lines of which do not, to me, make sense. The punctuation supplied for 129 may be misleading; perhaps the semicolon should come after "irradiates" (externally he has the appearance of a vulgar impostor) or after "without" (assuming it to be contrasted with "Within").

<sup>19</sup> *Excursion*, II, 865-9.

<sup>20</sup> Theodore Watts-Dunton said of Browning, "His desire is to express not wonder but knowingness, the opposite of wonder" (*Poetry and the Renaissance of Wonder*, New York, 1916, p. 287). Watts-Dunton's characterization of romanticism as "the renaissance of wonder" is illuminating in this connection, since it is because of the importance Wordsworth attached to wonder, solitude, mystery and the like and to the emotions and intuitions which are associated with them that he is essentially and nobly, although not superficially, a romantic poet.

<sup>21</sup> Observe that there is nothing to suggest pre-existence in this picture of infancy, although there was plenty of opportunity, if Wordsworth had thought of the matter.

<sup>22</sup> De S., 553, note to lines 29-30. Another illustration of a sound that fascinated him by arousing his wonder is given in de S., 562. See also pp. 81, 142 above and i. 469-75 and vi. 50-2. The lines that begin "Among a grave fraternity" mention "salutary sense of awe Or sacred wonder" (24-5).

<sup>23</sup> Collier's report of Coleridge's eighth lecture on Shakespeare, 1811-12, *Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism*, ed. Raysor, II, 148-9. Coleridge said much the same thing though not with reference to the poet in *Anima Poetae* (p. 41) and again in *The Friend* (number 5 of 1809-10 edition; I, 183 of 1818 edition) when pointing out the distinctive characteristics of genius.

<sup>24</sup> Dorothy to Mrs. Clarkson, March 27, 1821. Over six and a half years elapsed between the beginning and the completion of the first draft of *The Prelude*, of the long-promised *Recluse* only one book was ever written.

<sup>25</sup> *Excursion*, IV, 974-5; *Prelude*, III, 180; XII, 272-3; *Recluse*, "Prospectus," 35-40. To be sure, lines 154 and 156 of the present passage mention "spiritual need" and "the firmament of thought" but the wonder of the latter is not stressed and nothing is said of the spiritual ministry of wonder.

<sup>26</sup> *Sartor Resartus*, I, chapter X. Goethe remarked: "Das Hochste, wozu der Mensch gelangen kann, ist das Erstaunen, und wenn ihn das Urphänomen in Erstaunen setzt, so sei er zufrieden; ein Höheres kann es ihm nicht gewähren, und ein Weiteres soll er nicht dahinter suchen: hier ist die Grenze" (*Gespräche mit Eckermann*, February 18, 1829); but this was not a general observation, as Goethe was speaking of the color of drinking glasses.

<sup>27</sup> *The Tamworth Reading Room*, in *Discussions and Arguments*, 1918, p. 302.

<sup>28</sup> *Rousseau and Romanticism*, Boston, 1919, p. 49. Cf. Mr. Babbitt's "The Problem of the Imagination. Coleridge" in *On Being Creative*, Boston, 1932, pp. 120-1, 130-1.

<sup>29</sup> See i. 409 n.; ii. 221 n.

<sup>30</sup> *Poetry and the Renaissance of Wonder*, p. 240.

<sup>31</sup> See pp. 141-6 above and xiv. 157-62 and n.

<sup>32</sup> *Biographia Literaria*, chapter XIV (ed. Shawcross, II, 6).

<sup>33</sup> *Defence of Poetry, Works*, ed. H. B. Forman, VII, 140.

## BOOK IX

BOOKS ix, x, and the first half of xi are devoted to the French Revolution, Wordsworth's connection with it, and its influence on his life and thought. They are of historical value and of great biographical interest but contain fewer outstanding passages, less philosophy, and, because of the unusual character of the experiences chronicled, throw less light on the development of the typical poet than do any other parts of the work. True, they are less hampered by "system" than are some other books since they have less to do with the purpose for which the poem was written, but I cannot agree with the remaining points which Mr. Harper finds in their favor: that they are "more vivid and spontaneous, more fluently written, and . . . as a narrative . . . constitute . . . [the] climax" of the poem (II, 149-50). A. V. Dicey commends them on other grounds as giving "an invaluable record of first-hand reflection by a keen observer, endowed at once with sympathetic imagination and with profound thoughtfulness, on some of the leading events of the Revolution." Their value to historians of the period, he adds, "has hardly as yet received adequate acknowledgement."<sup>1</sup> They should be compared with the similar picture of the Revolution given in *The Excursion*, iii. 706-834.

(It was the French Revolution that made Wordsworth a great poet. This is not to say that his sojourn in France put into him something that was not already there nor merely that it called forth and helped to develop qualities that might otherwise have lain dormant. Mentally as well as physically it meant transplanting, with the fresh vigor that different food and the exertion required for adaptation to a new environment bring to men as well as to plants. With Wordsworth there were several transplantings—to France, to London, and to Goslar—and, although his enthusiasm for the Revolution soon faded, when he returned to country life (first at Racedown and Alfoxden, later at Grasmere) he saw it through new eyes. Mentally he had been greatly stimulated: his interest in men



had been aroused, his belief in the ministry of nature as well as in the value of instincts and emotions had deepened, had become more conscious and more sure, because he had doubted them and lived without them. It was in reacting against the Revolution and the theorizing and over-intellectualizing engendered by it that he became a man and a poet. As Sir Walter Raleigh has said:

The secret of the making [of a poet], if ever it should be divined, would be found, according to his [Wordsworth's] conception of it, exactly at that point where the free and vigorous life of sense and thought in any young creature is, by some predestined accident or series of accidents, arrested, surprised, checked, challenged, and turned in and back upon itself. Then for the first time the soul makes an inventory of its wealth, and discovers that it has great possessions, that it has been a traveller in fairyland, and holds the clue to that mystery. With the discovery the period of acquisition closes, or at least the incomings thenceforward are slower, less authentic, more liable to sophistication, and the newly awakened poet is left to make the best of what he has saved from the days when, all unwittingly, he enjoyed a royal revenue.<sup>2</sup>

To this admirable comment there is but one objection, namely the lack of evidence that Wordsworth himself ever looked on the Revolution as the accident which turned him back upon himself and led to the discovery of his great possessions, that he realized how essential to the exuberant springtime of 1778-1806 the severe winter of 1793-7 had been. He seems to have thought of his Revolutionary and rationalistic periods as disappointments and errors from which he recovered, not as "vales of soul-making" through which he found himself.

Book IX deals chiefly with eight months of Wordsworth's twenty-second and twenty-third years: his residence at Orleans and Blois from December 6, 1791, to the departure of Beaupuy, July 27, 1792. It summarizes the stay in London (February to May, 1791), omits the equally long visit to Wales (May to September) and the brief residence in Cambridge, and passes directly to Paris (November 30 to December 5). The remainder of the book is devoted to the development of Wordsworth's enthusiasm for the Revolution, at Orleans and Blois, and the story of Vaudracour and Julia. Aside from the implica-

tions of this story there is no reference to his love affair or to the other subject that must have taken a large share of his time and thought, poetic composition. For "much the greatest part" of *Descriptive Sketches* and, perhaps, some of *Guilt and Sorrow* were written at this time.

Professor de Selincourt believes (pp. xxxviii, xxxix) that IX was composed in April, 1804, immediately after VI and before VII and VIII. Yet the opening lines, which clearly mark a fresh start and an overcoming of the poet's reluctance to enter upon his revolutionary experiences (A 9-17, A 1-9), seem to refer to VIII, where the "motions" are all "retrograde" (A 8). Furthermore they suggest that the composition of IX was put off as long as possible and not that it was taken up before half the poem was completed. If Professor de Selincourt is right in thinking that VIII was written after IX, neither A 1-17 nor A 18-39 (which could not possibly come immediately after VI) could have formed part of the original manuscript, which has disappeared.

Except for the omission of the tale of Vaudracour and Julia few changes have been made in the revision of this book, even in the 227 lines for which we have the early manuscript Y. In the 300 lines between 236 and 540 very few alterations were made and between 285 and 315, 357 and 382, 393 and 430, 480 and 513 none save punctuation, spelling, and a letter or two (the punctuation and spelling of the 1850 text is not Wordsworth's). This is probably due to the uncomplicated subject matter, which is mainly narration and simple exposition.

1-7, 9-16, 23-4, 51. Imagery; cf. vi. 158-60 n. The first figure is particularly apt but becomes badly mixed in A 3. With the second, which is not in A, compare Wordsworth's letter to his sister of September 6 to 16, 1790: "Again and again, in quitting a fortunate station, have I returned to it with the most eager avidity, in the hope of bearing away a more lively picture."

3. *fear*: Explained in 21-2 and more definitely in A 15-17. Wordsworth dreaded to enter on the Revolution, although it offered none of the difficulties of expression presented by more metaphysical passages of other books, because it had so grievously disappointed him. This was the only part of his story

that ended in despair. Even the first happy months in France were unpleasant to dwell upon because of the concealment they involved and the political disillusionment that followed. Furthermore, in his relations with Annette, in his absorption in abstract theory, and in the uncertainty of mind and of life which characterized the later years of this period he found much to regret.

4. *the ravenous sea*: The Revolution.

19. *shapeless*: Vague? Cf. *Excursion*, ii. 226, "new and shapeless wishes."

26-8. Though Wordsworth enjoyed a good deal of such intercourse he never sought it.

A 24. Cf. vi. 767-8.

28. *a year*: Note "month after month" (25); yet he had spent only three and a half months in London! A possible explanation of this apparently incredible mistake is that he is consciously or unconsciously confusing with this early stay the six to eight months he spent in London immediately after his return from France and perhaps also the visit of about the same length between the death of Calvert and the departure for Racedown. There is no reason why he should not have done this deliberately just as he blended his second with his third year at Cambridge, and his residence at Orleans with that at Blois, and just as he omitted the visit to Wales and the brief post-graduate sojourn at Cambridge and said nothing about the latter half of his Swiss tour. He may well have felt that one long book and part of another would seem too much space to devote to an uneventful three and a half months and that vii and viii had really been concerned with the second visit as well as the first—the two together extended to "scarcely a year." The poem, which is a study in development not a biography, certainly gains from such a simplification of reality. See 40-41 n.; v. 389-425 n. and pp. 270-1, 283, 394 above.

A 23-39. Only half a dozen or so words of this passage are retained in the final text, which adds the rather pompous lines 34-40. A 25-30 comments on the ministry of the city to the poet's development, concerning which little is said in vii (see pp. 436-7, 451 above).

✓ 31. *art*: Wordsworth seems never to have realized what the

other arts—which are represented in *The Prelude* by Le Brun's *Magdalene*! (see 74-80 and note vii. 240-59)—may contribute to a poet's development. Wherever in his poems, his notes to them, or his letters, he touches on painting or sculpture it is the idea alone or (as in the fine sonnet to Haydon) the character needed by the artist that interests him. This was one of the unrealized inadequacies of his education—how little realized is shown in his remark that "there were three callings for success in which Nature had furnished him with qualifications—the callings of poet, landscape-gardener, and critic of pictures and works of art."<sup>3</sup> He acknowledged, however, "The statues and pictures of the Louvre affect me feebly in comparison" with the Jardin des Plantes,<sup>4</sup> and Crabb Robinson observed:

I did not perceive that Wordsworth enjoyed much the Elgin Marbles, but he is a still man when he does enjoy himself and by no means ready to talk of his pleasure except to Miss Wordsworth. But we could hardly see the statues. The Memnon, however, seemed to interest him very much. I have thought that Wordsworth's enjoyment of works of art is very much in proportion to their subserviency to poetical illustration. I doubt whether he feels the beauty of mere form.<sup>5</sup>

Yet Hazlitt, who himself painted and wrote extensively about painting, praised Wordsworth's comments on Poussin's landscapes; and Haydon wrote, "His knowledge of art is extraordinary. He detects errors in hands like a connoisseur or artist."<sup>6</sup>

32. *book-stalls*: "I well remember, that, twenty-five years ago, the booksellers' stalls in London swarmed with the folios of Cowley."<sup>7</sup>

A 36-7. Dorothy wrote to Jane Pollard on December 7, 1791, "William is . . . at Orleans . . . for the purpose of learning the French Language which will qualify him for the office of travelling companion to some young gentleman"; yet here he seems to go out of his way to say that his "wish To speak the language more familiarly" was "personal," that is, non-professional. In his Autobiographical Memoranda he declared, "I . . . went to Orleans, with a view of being out of the way of my own countrymen, that I might learn to speak the language fluently" (Grosart, III, 222). He wrote Mathews on

November 23, 1791, that he expected "considerable pleasure . . . and some little improvement" from his sojourn in France and that he had consented to devote himself to Oriental languages on his return. From the final text of *The Prelude* he removed all reference to learning the language and said simply, "France lured me forth." He had felt the lure during his trip with Jones, for in his letter to Dorothy of September 6 to 16, 1790, he spoke enthusiastically of the French people, their courtesy, "real benevolence," "cheerfulness and sprightliness" and added, "It was a most interesting period to be in France." Clearly his mind was unsettled, his plans vague, his motives mixed; yet the selection of Orleans points strongly to an interest in the language rather than in the Revolution (his comparative indifference to the Revolution is also clear from 67-120).

40-1. The name is not given because the "pleasant town" is a fusion of Orleans and Blois and perhaps for the same reason that neither Cockermouth nor Hawkshead are named in Book I—the desire to avoid the merely personal. Since in his Autobiographical Memoranda Wordsworth mentioned both Orleans and Blois and pointed out what happened of public interest when he was in each city, there is no reason to suppose that he sought here to suppress the facts. For artistic reasons he simplified them, and if this had not been the time of his affair with Annette no one would have questioned the wisdom of his doing so. See 28 n.

42-3. According to his letter to his brother Richard of December 19, 1791,<sup>8</sup> the dates of Wordsworth's trip are as follows: on Tuesday, November 22, he went from London to Brighthelmstone, where he was detained until the night of November 26; he "got to Dieppe" the morning of Sunday the 27th "and the same night to Rouen," where he was "detained two days"; he reached Paris the evening of Wednesday the 30th and remained there until Monday, December 5th; the following day he was in Orleans.

48-51. In the letter to his brother Richard of December 19, 1791, Wordsworth wrote, "I was at the national assembly, introduced by a member of whose acquaintance I shall profit on my return to Paris."

57-8. Is the alliteration ("st" in 57, "h" in 58) unintentional? See iii. 28 n.

71-3. Cf. A 23-5; vi. 766-78; x. 55-63. The reason is given in 92-5: Wordsworth knew too little about the Revolution and was too little interested in social and political questions to be moved. A further reason is given in 243-8. As usual, his analysis of his own state of mind (note also 75, 82-92, 98-9, and A 73-4) is both keen and honest.

74-80. Much better than the early versions. Note "most . . . utmost" (A 72) and the wordiness of A 76-7. Le Brun's work pleased him because it appealed to his emotions; cf. viii. A 841-2 and n.

85. A 84-5 adds "at first" and "and satisfied."

93-5. A good figure.

96-7. These lines give a different impression from that made by "eagerly" (A 95).

106-7. Cf. 74-80, 123-4, and viii. A 841-2 and n. Apparently the pamphlets had been largely political and theoretical, and politics and theory had, as yet, little interest for Wordsworth (198-204). It was not until his heart was touched and his enthusiasm aroused (262-87, 509-22) that he gave much thought to the Revolution; the rights of man made little appeal to him until he had sympathized with the wrongs. His approach was through the concrete not the abstract, through human contacts not through reasoning. The "arguments" which proved the justice of the cause were "passing spectacles" by which his "heart Was oftentimes uplifted" (281-7), and it was not a book but a man, and one who was both enthusiastic and attractive, who interested him in theory.

112. *must be compelled to do*: "Must" would have been sufficient.<sup>9</sup> See 74-80 n.; iii. 506-11 n.; iv. 312-16 n.; x. 44-7 n., 364-74 n.; xiv. 293-6, footnote 33; de S., xlv.

117. The chiasmus is not in the earlier texts. Cf. xi. A 869-70; xii. 13-14; xiii. 180.

121-4. Each of these lines has an "and" near the middle.

125-6. See de S., xlv. "Band" is likewise better than "knot" (A 126).

125. We now pass to Blois and to February or March, 1792, although 113-22 are doubtless applicable not only to Orleans but to the first part of his stay at Blois.

139-61. The reader is likely to assume that this is the person

referred to in 132 and described in 288-321,—that is, Beaupuy. But this man was clearly a Royalist (143-53); 152-8 is inconsistent with the description of Beaupuy; and 288-9 must refer to 132 and not to 139-61, which is too long to be termed a hint.

140. *prime*: Cf. xiii. 122 and n. He was really young but looked old.

A 152. The reading of A<sup>2</sup>C avoids the "lovely" of A and the pomposity of the final text (149-50)—a fault which reappears in 154-5.

155-61. It is remarkable that after more than twelve years Wordsworth still remembered these details, especially the gesture described in 159-60. To be sure they may be due in part to the unconscious working of the creative faculty. See x. 532-3 n. and pp. 280-2 above.

✓ 167-80. Wordsworth missed the dignity, the concern with large interests, and the idealism that he had associated with great historical events (cf. 204-8). All was passion, strife, and pettiness—violent discussion of men who in a few months were forgotten.

188-97. An illustration of that "shrewd discernment" which Wordsworth notes as characteristic of his native region (A 218, variant in A<sup>2</sup>C).

✓ 198-201. Cf. xi. 75-98. This defect together with his indifference to history should have been remedied at Cambridge.

203. Clearer and more definite than A 205. The meaning is, "in comparison with my interest in unworldly matters."

204-8. On Wordsworth's indifference to history see viii. 617-25 n.; xii. A 90-1 n.; xiii. 41-4.

208. This line explains "fair forms."

212-14. "But rather [I found] what I . . . ill could brook, . . . [viz.] that the best Ruled not." The omission of "loath'd" (A 215) makes the passage less radical.

215. *and which*: There is no preceding "which" for "and" to connect with the "which" in the text. Cf. A 289; iii. A 584; xiv. 142, A 268.

216. Both A 219 and the A<sup>2</sup>C variant of A 218 were probably rejected because it seemed unwise to claim for the lake district *more* moral virtue and shrewd discernment than any other part of England possessed.

222-32. See iii. 512-33 n.

✓ 233-5. What Wordsworth first wrote (A 236-8) would seem to mean that he was not dazzled by royalty or "the pomp Of orders and degrees" (209-10) because he had grown up amid manifestations of much more awful Power and conscious of subjection only to God and Nature. Presumably the possessive goes with God-and-Nature. It is clearly implied that God is not the same as Nature but that in the poet's youth the two were inextricably blended. But as *The Excursion* had been much criticized for pantheism, Wordsworth changed both the wording and meaning of these lines and thereby took away the reference to the ministry of fear (A 238) but not the suggestion of animism in "presences" (234, A 238).

A 289. Cf. 215 n.

238-40. Cf. *Recluse*, "Prospectus," 35-41. A 242-4 was wisely omitted.

243-8. Cf. 71-3 n.

245-6, 248. Pedestrian lines that are largely monosyllabic; see ii. 41-5 n.

250-1. *Inflamed . . . injury*: The addition of this line and a half so late as 1818 shows that Wordsworth did not become more favorable to the Royalists in later years. See 284-7 and n. The unnecessary "Whom I have mention'd" of A 255 was later dropped.

✓ 254-87. These lines indicate that there were two causes besides the conversations with Beaupuy which led Wordsworth to become a "patriot": the intemperate attacks on the Revolution and on democratic principles made by prejudiced Royalists whom he met, and the sight of enthusiastic, unselfish young republicans on their way to the front. Although these are mentioned before anything is said of Beaupuy we are not warranted in concluding that they came first chronologically.

255-6. A good figure.

258-60. A reference to the inferiority of the reasoning faculty to intuition, of *Verstand* to *Vernunft*; see xii. 45 n., A 134-7.

267-70. In his youth and in private Wordsworth was easily moved to tears; see viii. A 841-2 n.

278-80. It is surprising to find this kind of susceptibility in



Wordsworth. Cf. Whitman's "Faces," "To a Stranger," "Give me the splendid silent sun."

281-4. Cf. 106-7. and n.

284-7. There is no apparent reason for the vehemence of these lines, in which adjective is piled on adjective as if the poet wished to pour out upon the opponents of the Revolution his entire vocabulary of condemnation. Yet even this was not enough, for about 1817 he added a line and a half more in the same strain (250-1). It will be remembered that Annette's family were Royalists; Wordsworth may have quarreled with them on both political and personal grounds and may be here expressing the opinion he held of them as typical Royalists. Such a quarrel would explain many things: his failure to marry Annette, his leaving her before their child was born, and his not returning to see her and the child during the two or three months he spent in Paris. Since the other officers spurned Beaupuy with an oriental loathing because he was a "patriot," they probably treated Wordsworth in much the same way when he went over to the people.

288. Except for eight lines corresponding to viii. A 68-73, this is the beginning of MS Y.

It is noteworthy that Beaupuy, Dorothy, Coleridge, and William Taylor (master of Hawkshead school, see x. 532-52) are the only *persons* mentioned in *The Prelude* as exerting any significant influence on the poet's development. See v. 168-9 n.

297-8. Cf. viii. 241-4.

300-2. See vii. 77-84 n.

321-30. See 390-407 n.

324. *loyalty*: A has "prejudice"; A 330 was omitted later. Cf. xi. 159-61, which deals with this same period.

326-8. "In the few" is contrasted with "in the labouring multitude."

331-9. Cf. xi. 27-31.

347-8. Cf. "Lines left in a Yew-tree," 61-4:

True dignity abides with him alone  
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,  
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,  
In lowliness of heart.

See also iv. A 297-8 n., xiii. 80-1 n., 373.

352-3. See de S., xlv.

✓ 354-63, 385-9. Beaupuy and Wordsworth were infected by the prevalent "belief in the natural goodness and virtue of the people and in popular emotion as being the voice of God."<sup>10</sup> Observe that these were "dearest themes."

✓ 357-60. Both his instinctive, impulsive emotion and his conscious reason reveal "clear truth" to man (the ordinary man, it should be observed). The first destroys, breaking the chains of custom and statute; the second constructs, establishing a firm, orderly, enduring liberty.

361. Through knowledge a high type of social life is widely diffused and is rendered imperishable.

✓ 363. "Individual" is contrasted with "social" (360): "making social life . . . as pure As individual [life is] in the wise and good [man]."

367. They recalled instances of truth preserved etc. Apparently they ignored instances of the opposite kind and believed that truth is victorious in every encounter.

369-70. A mixed figure: the multitudes feed one another with truth and fan the flame of truth in one another.

✓ 370-5. The wide diffusion and rapid growth of Calvinism, of the Jesuit order, and of the Methodist church show what lovers of political liberty may hope to achieve.

371. *to put the appropriate nature on*: To coast off conventions and other restrictions and be what is commanded by or implied in their religion.

377-9. The spread of Mohammedanism?

390-407. It is clear from xi. 173-5 that xi. 98-172 refers to these discussions as well as to later meditations.

392-3. The Rotha, or Rothay, flows from Dunmail Raise eight miles through Grasmere Lake and Rydal Water to the Brathay, near its influx to Windermere. The Greta flows to the west at the foot of Skiddaw, past Greta Hall (where Coleridge lived for some years), and empties into the Derwent half a mile beyond Keswick. For the Derwent see i. 269-300 and i. A 277 n.

398. *nature*: Human nature.

400. *devoted*: To the cause, i. e. Beaupuy, whose conversation was "far more sweet" than that carried on later between

Coleridge and Wordsworth because Beaupuy was about to embody his ideas in action—to risk his life for them.

408-17. Wordsworth's enthusiasm for the French Revolution owed little, at least at its inception, to knowledge or reason. It was due largely to the influence of Beaupuy, to youthful idealism and devotion to abstract principles, and to admiration for the heroes of Greek liberty. This last feeling as well as most of the others he shared with the Girondists, whom he admired, and with the young Southey, who said that his *Joan of Arc* "was written in a republican spirit, such as may easily be accounted for in a youth whose notions of liberty were taken from the Greek and Roman writers, and who was ignorant enough of history and of human nature."<sup>11</sup> Note also viii. 617-25, x. 198-200, and Wordsworth's admiration for Plutarch (de S., 503); and see H. T. Parker, *The Cult of Antiquity and the French Revolutionaries*, Chicago, 1937.

422. *With like persuasion honoured*: Referring to 416-7 or 409-10 or 404-7; the Revolution was a "philosophic war, Led by Philosophers," Beaupuy and its other leaders were Dions engaged in "a Deliverer's glorious task" "by an authority Divine Sanctioned."

431-3. Contrasted with 424-6: "the unhappy Loire" stained with "civil slaughter" recalls the "Loire, with festal mirth Resounding" of these early days.

434-6. Much better than A and, since the construction of "footing" (A 441) is no longer uncertain, clearer.

437-501. See vii. 77-84 n.

440-6. These excellent lines, which furnish an admirable introduction to what follows and of which there is only a hint in A, were apparently added about 1828.

446-8. Not only is this better expressed than in A but, through the addition of "Heard, though unseen," an element essential to the mastering of the poet's fancy is emphasized.

472. Keen self-scrutiny. Presumably Wordsworth wrought up within himself a feeling for the Revolution that was more sentimental than Beaupuy's since it was in part divorced from reality and from the willingness to sacrifice himself for the cause.

475-8. Cf. vi. 483-5, viii. 273-5.

479. Cf. de S., xlvii.

483-4. *name now slipped From my remembrance*: These two pedestrian, incongruous half lines are not only most awkwardly expressed, but unnecessary. See Chapter I.

501-41. Beaupuy and Wordsworth shared the "excessive confidence in the beneficial effect of political and especially of constitutional reforms" which prevailed at the time and which is "closely connected with inordinate trust in the virtue of the people."<sup>12</sup>

508, 522, 540, 549. Monosyllables.

524. The substitution of "meek" and "patient" for "industrious" is an improvement in euphony but not in thought.

539. *not*: I do not see that "the sense clearly requires 'but'" (de S. note to A 539). The meaning would seem to be, "unless, indeed, the air should be free," i.e. unless punishment be abolished.

A 542. *as my purpose was*: Wisely omitted, though of interest to the student. Lines 541-2 are an improvement over A 541-3.

547-52. Unlike the final version, A does not assert, although the context may suggest, ~~that the story is told to illustrate the evils of the *ancien regime*~~. This moral is also pointed out in "Vaudracour and Julia," 149-50, which is not in A.

✓ 553-85. General comment on the story of Vaudracour and Julia, on Wordsworth's relations with Annette, and on the omission from *The Prelude* of any direct reference to them will be found at the end of the notes to the present book.

The principal differences other than verbal between "Vaudracour and Julia" and A 554-993 are the omission from "Vaudracour and Julia" of the following lines that are in A: 683-93, 715-40, 750-62, 764-95, 815-38, 861-70, 882-6; and the addition of the following lines that are not in A: 25-31, 51-3, 94-101, 138-50, 164-5, 193-5, 207-9. "Vaudracour and Julia" is 72 lines shorter than the A text owing principally to its summarizing some of the numerous separations and reunions of the lovers which A gives in full detail.<sup>13</sup> Of the lines omitted, A 686-93 are much better than most of those retained; A 781-4 are unpleasantly reminiscent of Pamela's coffin and of the edifying sentimental tale; A 816-17 contain a most unkind

and unchivalrous remark; A 819-26 give realistic details interesting in themselves which are not in the spirit of the rest of the piece and which add nothing to its effectiveness. One of the additions cannot be praised too highly—"Vaudracour and Julia," 94-101. Yet, like several of the others (134-5, 193-5, 207-9, and perhaps 138-50), it is not in the tone and manner of the poem as a whole. Another inharmonious but interesting addition effective in a florid, antithetical, un-Wordsworthian way is 155-6.

A 563-5. In "Vaudracour and Julia," 15, "Plebeian, though ingenuous." With "Vaudracour and Julia," 31, cf. i. 615.

A 582-93. Professor Legouis remarks that the "attitude of wonder is more in keeping with the youth's [i.e., Wordsworth's] sudden passion for the foreigner, than with Vaudracour's long and tender love for his Julia, known from the cradle."<sup>14</sup> Concerning A 582-3, see vii. 77-84 n.

A 599. This line, which was later dropped presumably because of its obscurity, may mean that he was uncertain as to how the marriage was to be brought about, or as to the outcome, or as to whether he was justified in turning from law to nature. A 596-602 may be applicable to Wordsworth's own case.

✓ A 602. *Nature*: Contrasted with "law and custom," hence presumably refers to the spontaneous and instinctive; at the same time the phrase "entrust himself To Nature" seems to mean something like "trust Providence" so that Nature is also the cosmic order personified as a benevolent power. Cf. 571 n.

A 638-40. Perhaps in these beautiful lines also Wordsworth is to some extent "drawing on his own experience" (de S., 573). A 633-6 and A 640-3 recall *Peter Bell*, 131-45 (quoted in v. 573-7 n.).

"Vaudracour and Julia," 94-101. Seldom did Wordsworth in his revisions introduce a completely new passage so notable as this one, which seems to have been added between 1817 and 1819. It is unfortunate that lines which for magic and passion he never excelled are hidden in what Matthew Arnold regarded as its author's only unreadable poem.<sup>15</sup> "Galaxy" (97), the Milky Way.

A 643-8. Some will find support in these lines for the belief that Wordsworth left Annette in order to secure from his guardians the funds wherewith to marry. On the other hand, we know that in A 777-8 there is no parallel to Wordsworth's case.

A 654. Cf. the last line of *Paradise Regained*, "Home to his mother's house private returned."

A 744. *travers'd*: Thwarted.

571. "Nature" is here contrasted with "monstrous law" as, in the interesting A<sup>3</sup> variant of A 722-3, "wicked institutes" are contrasted with "Nature and . . . God." The meaning is apparently "whatever is prompted or required by the instincts common to man and all animals."<sup>16</sup>

581-5. Changed but slightly from A 929-33 and "Vaudra-cour and Julia," 304-8.

553-85. VAUDRACOUR AND JULIA, WILLIAM AND ANNETTE.

Wordsworth's love affair with Annette Vallon, first discovered by Mr. Harper, but most fully narrated by M. Legouis, has been interpreted by Herbert Read, by Hugh l'Anson Fausset, by O. J. Campbell, Paul Mueschke,<sup>17</sup> and others as the key to much of the poet's life and work. Although Wordsworth's admirers have been too eager to put a favorable interpretation on his conduct, some of their arguments together with those of Miss Edith Batho<sup>18</sup> and the sane, dispassionate review of the whole case by Dean Willard L. Sperry<sup>19</sup> leave little ground for believing that remorse for his neglect of his French sweetheart was a force that corroded his thought and sapped his poetic vitality. The development of any individual is far more complicated than any reconstruction of it is likely to make it appear, since we know very few of the "little nameless unremembered" happenings that largely determine that development and since external events such as one would expect to be important often leave almost no influence. A love affair may be as transient as it is passionate. Furthermore, in the words of Mr. T. S. Eliot, "Impressions and experiences which are important for the man may take no place in the poetry, and those which become important in the poetry may play quite a negligible part in the man, the personality."<sup>20</sup> If anything is clear from *The Prelude* it is that the significant events of Wordsworth's early life were those which only he remembered.

Anyone who makes a careful study of the matter, distinguishing sharply between conjecture and fact, must be impressed with how little we know about some of the most important aspects of it, and how little attention has been paid by commentators on it to the matter-of-factness which was strong in Wordsworth's nature. For we are not sure that Wordsworth ever intended to marry Annette, and if he did why the ceremony was not performed when her condition was discovered, why he left her at Orleans before Caroline was born and did not return afterwards. We do not know how he reconciled his conduct with his plan of entering the church nor how

we are to reconcile his supposed absorption in love with his growing interest in the Revolution. His feeling for Annette almost certainly developed first, and as she was a Royalist the two passions may have come into serious conflict and the later one have crowded out the earlier.<sup>21</sup> Certain it is that while she was awaiting the birth of their child he was giving himself to the Revolutionary cause with such ardent enthusiasm that, had he not been compelled to return home, he would have perished for it. Even at Blois he had found time not only for politics but for poetry—for completing his *Descriptive Sketches*.<sup>22</sup>

In view of all these uncertainties,<sup>23</sup> it is unsound to build up theories which assume that we know Wordsworth's state of mind in 1793-8. As far as it concerned Annette we cannot know it, for we do not know how largely she herself was responsible for her fall, whether he looked upon her as his wife in all but name or as the passion of a few months. Disquiet he must have felt and some remorse; yet it is noteworthy that in this, the only poem certainly inspired by the affair, Vaudracour expresses remorse for the murder but never for his relations with Julia.

The omission from *The Prelude* of any explicit reference to the experience is another matter, and one that is more understandable than creditable to the poet, who was placed in an embarrassing predicament. The insertion of Vaudracour's story at this point indicates that he felt that some allusion should be made to his relations with Annette; but later, although he may not have been fully aware of how badly he had handled it, he apparently realized that an insert tale of this length (the only one in the poem) was artistically a great blemish. Even so he did not omit it but substituted a forty-line summary;<sup>24</sup> hence it may be argued that what he lacked was not the will but the skill to handle the matter effectively. Perhaps he may have made other attempts that proved still less satisfactory, for there was need of a delicacy, a deftness, and a tact which he did not often command. Here as elsewhere *The Prelude* may well represent, not what its author wished and attempted, but the best he could bring to pass. The merely personal side of the affair—details as to where and how it began, its outcome, the



personality of Annette, and the like—was, of course, no concern of the public, but (as the work was to be posthumous) the poet might have told, as other biographers have done, that he loved, might have shown (as he did in two breathless passages) what that love meant to him, and have traced the part it played in making him a creative artist. Had he done so we might have accepted his assertion that in his "history"

the discipline  
And consummation of a Poet's mind,  
In everything that stood most prominent,  
Have faithfully been pictured; (xiv. 303-6)

but as it is, I do not see how we can. A force which ranks as one of the chief in the development of most poets is omitted from *The Prelude*. In his own case, since it directly inspired so little of his work and since he wrote no significant poems until four or five years after meeting Annette, he presumably came to believe that his love for her had little influence on his poetry. But if so he overlooked the stimulus that a tumultuous passion with its later repercussions is likely to have on any imaginative artist and especially on one of a vigorous, but reserved temperament. ("There is another," as M. Legouis remarks, "an aesthetic, reason for regret. The reality was richer, more complex and humane than the simplification of his experiences given us by Wordsworth. His poetry suffers from his over-expurgation of Nature."<sup>25</sup>) There can be no question that the intimacy with Annette influenced his development more profoundly than did many of the episodes narrated in *The Prelude*, but these are introduced as illustrations of the working of important forces: nature, boyish sports, books, university life, city life, the Revolution, the imagination. His love for Annette may have affected him more than some of these; we cannot know; presumably he thought it did not. But in any case if the significance of romantic love for the poet were to be discussed it would require more than a hundred or two lines.

Yet it is doubtful whether, even if Wordsworth had married Annette, *The Prelude* would have said much about her or would have included any adequate consideration of the ministry of romantic love to the poet's development. He had

previously cared for Mary Hutchinson and he mentions this attachment as "the blessed time of early love" (xii. A 318), but that is all. Not only was he profoundly reticent in such matters but he had something of a prejudice against most love poetry. The Pastor in *The Excursion* exclaims:

Pangs are there not enough in hopeless love—  
And, in requited passion, all too much  
Of turbulence, anxiety, and fear—  
But that the minstrel of the rural shade  
Must tune his pipe, insidiously to nurse  
The perturbation in the suffering breast,  
And propagate its kind, far as he may? (vii. 367-73)

The function of the poet as Wordsworth saw it was not to "nurse perturbation," not to give vivid pictures of the passions as Byron did, but to uphold us, cherish, to embody visionary power in the mystery of words, and to invest the material universe with a glory not its own. Since love poetry rarely does this and since it rouses emotions which it does not allay, Wordsworth was not favorably inclined towards it. Great poetry springs from passion but from such passion as "is highest reason in a soul sublime" (v. 40-1), from

those passages of life in which  
We have had deepest feeling that the mind  
Is lord and master, and that outward sense  
Is but the obedient servant of her will. (xii. A 270-3)

For Wordsworth the transports of the lover have none of this revealing virtue.<sup>26</sup> This comes out not only in the passage cited from *The Excursion* but in his remark as reported by Aubrey de Vere:

✓ . . . that if he had avoided that form of composition [love-poetry], it was by no means because the theme did not interest him, but because, treated as it commonly has been, it tends rather to disturb and lower the reader's moral and imaginative being than to elevate it. He feared to handle it amiss. He seemed to think that the subject had been so long vulgarised, that few poets had a right to assume that they could treat it worthily.<sup>27</sup>

These last two sentences express what was certainly another powerful deterrent, "He feared to handle it amiss." The

"raptures" of lovers, he confesses, have "been set forth In more delightful verse than skill of mine Could fashion" (A 633-6), and with the ministry of such rapture to the making of a poet he felt disinclined if not unable to cope.

The more one studies the insert tale of "Vaudracour and Julia" the more amazingly inept and inexplicable it becomes. Presumably Wordsworth chose it because the first part was close to his own love affair while the latter part and the character of the hero were so clearly not autobiographical that the parallel would not be too obvious. Yet therein lay the cause of his failure, for most of the incidents and the personality of the hero lay outside of his experience and of his imaginative comprehension. Wordsworth's interests were fairly wide but his insight, though profound, was narrow in range and he sometimes courted disaster by embarking on a subject that interested him but failed to touch his imagination and of which, accordingly, he had no real understanding. Furthermore, as told in A, the story is too involved, has too many separations, reunions, escapes, and imprisonments, to be narrated in 380 lines. But even when several of these are summarized, as in "Vaudracour and Julia," there remains an incongruous mixture of youthful romance and dreary realism which it would be most difficult to harmonize and, with a hero like Vaudracour, to make effective.

The discords are not harmonized by Wordsworth; the best parts of his account, the earlier, reflect the ecstasy of his own love affair, whereas the remainder is deliberately kept low in key and matter-of-fact in detail and style. Apparently the poem was intended to be like "The Ruined Cottage" (*Excursion*, i. 469-916) or the short, simply-told narratives of humble life written during the *Lyrical Ballads* period, which culminate magnificently in "Michael." It resembles Wordsworth's early pieces of this period in its sentimental morality,<sup>28</sup> its attack on class privilege and class prejudice, and its exemplifying the principle of poetic art expounded in the preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*. The style is conversational, loose, and wordy and the diction strongly monosyllabic.<sup>29</sup> The pedestrian style and the profusion of irrelevant details (which result in a lack of focus,

each fact appearing as important as every other) are well shown in the lines leading up to the murder:

the Son  
Was left with one Attendant in the house.  
Retiring to his Chamber for the night,  
While he was entering at the door, attempts  
Were made to seize him by three armed Men.  
(A 671-5)

But the *coup de grace* is the character of the hero. Impulsive, passionate, and stubborn in the first part of the story, meek and colorless in the remainder, he seems consistent only in his weakness and general futility. He is powerless not only before his passion but before the consequences of it. He cannot extricate himself from difficulties; he adds to Julia's unhappiness instead of relieving it; he allows his child to die and melancholy to overpower his reason. He remains in our memory as he lay supported by the long-suffering woman whom he had wronged, and to whom he exclaims, "How much thine eyes Have cost me," languidly propping his melancholy face upon one of her breasts "while from the other The Babe was drawing in its quiet food."

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *The Statesmanship of Wordsworth*, Oxford, 1917, pp. 20-21.

<sup>2</sup> *Wordsworth*, 1903, p. 29. Cf. Herbert Read, *Wordsworth*, New York, 1931, p. 256.

<sup>3</sup> *Reminiscences of R. P. Graves* (Grosart, III, 468). In a letter to Rogers of September 20, 1827, he spoke of himself as "a passionate lover of the Art" of painting.

<sup>4</sup> Letter to Lord Lonsdale of October 7, 1820.

<sup>5</sup> Diary for November 20, 1820.

<sup>6</sup> Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age*, Works, ed. Waller and Glover, IV, 277; Haydon's Journal for June 16, 1842.

<sup>7</sup> "Essay, supplementary to the Preface" (*Oxf. W.*, p. 947).

<sup>8</sup> See also J. R. MacGillivray in the *Times Literary Supplement*, April 24, 1930. Professor de Selincourt gives other dates (de S., 566 and *Early Letters of W. and D. Wordsworth*, Oxford, 1935, p. 66 n.) which ignore Wordsworth's letter to Mathews headed "Brighton, Nov. 23."

<sup>9</sup> Wordsworth's tautology is emphasized by Herbert Dingle in "The Analytical Approach to Wordsworth," *The Realist*, I (June, 1929), 148-9.

<sup>10</sup> A. V. Dicey, *The Statesmanship of Wordsworth*, p. 25.

<sup>11</sup> Preface to *Joan in Poetical Works*, 1837, I, p. xxix.

<sup>12</sup> A. V. Dicey, *The Statesmanship of Wordsworth*, p. 30.

<sup>13</sup> A few slight changes were made in later years, the most important of which is the substitution of "Was in his judgment tempted to decline To perilous weakness" for 61-2a (A 600-1a).

<sup>14</sup> *William Wordsworth and Annette Vallon*, 1922, p. 16.

<sup>15</sup> "Wordsworth," *Essays in Criticism*, second series, New York, 1924, p. 162.

<sup>16</sup> A. O. Lovejoy and G. Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity*, Baltimore, 1935, p. 452. See above, III 557 n.; XI 27-34 n., A 879 n.

<sup>17</sup> E. Legouis, *William Wordsworth and Annette Vallon*, 1922; H. Read, *Wordsworth*, New York, 1931; H. Fausset, *The Lost Leader*, 1933; O. J. Campbell and P. Mueschke, "Wordsworth's aesthetic development, 1795-1802," University of Michigan Publications, Language and Literature, 1933, pp. 1-57.

<sup>18</sup> *The Later Wordsworth*, Cambridge, 1933, pp. 106-13, 258-61, 313-14.

<sup>19</sup> *Wordsworth's Anti-climax*, Cambridge, Mass., 1935, chapter VI.

<sup>20</sup> *The Sacred Wood*, 2 ed., 1928, p. 56.

<sup>21</sup> See 284-7 n. In his presidential address before the English Association (*The Early Wordsworth*, 1936, pp. 16-19), Professor de Selincourt shows that Wordsworth's old love for Mary Hutchinson was reawakened so early as 1794.

<sup>22</sup> A minor perplexity is offered by the visit he and Dorothy made in August, 1802, to Calais, just before his marriage, in order to see Annette and Caroline. Why did they stay four weeks? A strange meeting—the first in ten years; Wordsworth spent part of the time writing political sonnets against the French. The silence of Dorothy's journal as to Annette is disquieting.

<sup>23</sup> There are many others. Professor Legouis, for example, believes that Annette met Wordsworth when she was visiting her brother in Orleans and was pregnant when she returned to Blois; but as there is some reason for thinking that the poet was in Blois in February and as Caroline, unless a pre-

mature birth, must have been conceived early in March, the first meeting may have occurred at Blois. Likewise we are by no means certain that Wordsworth "could not bring himself to put the sea between himself and Annette" (*William Wordsworth and Annette Vallon*, p. 25) until he learned of the birth of his child; certainly he intended to do so for he wrote his brother on September 3, 1792, that he should return to London in October. Caroline was christened December fifteenth and he left France in December or early in January; he would have stayed much longer but for "absolute want of funds" (x. A 191-2). This lack of funds may well explain his not returning to Orleans to see Annette and his child. But see 284-7 n.

✓ Mr. Harper declares "there is good reason to believe he risked his life to bring Annette and his French daughter to England" (*Saturday Review of Literature*, New York, April 4, 1931), yet the reasons for thinking that Wordsworth returned to France in 1793 can hardly be termed "good," and as to the purpose of the journey, if it was ever made, we know nothing.

<sup>24</sup> Professor de Selincourt's remark, "Doubtless he omitted it in part to avert suspicion" (p. 573), is open to serious question, for the tale is summarized not omitted and the reader is referred to the complete poem. Artistically the better way would have been to omit all mention of it and perhaps to continue ix to the return to England (x. 236). Wordsworth may have realized this but may have felt that he must include at least a hint of his intimacy with Annette.

<sup>25</sup> *William Wordsworth and Annette Vallon*, p. 117.

✓ <sup>26</sup> Adapted with slight changes from Walter Raleigh's *Wordsworth*, p. 202. Professor Grierson, who thinks Dorothy the heroine of the *Lucy poems*, agrees with Legouis that they "express Wordsworth's sense of relief in escaping from a love of passion to a love of affection" (*Milton and Wordsworth*, Cambridge, 1937, p. 155).

<sup>27</sup> "Recollections of Wordsworth" (Grosart, III, 491). De Vere said of Wordsworth: "There was in his being a region of tumult as well as a higher region of calm, though it was almost wholly in the latter that his poetry lived. It turned aside from mere *personal* excitements" (*ibid.*, 489).

<sup>28</sup> See O. J. Campbell, "Sentimental Morality in Wordsworth's Narrative Poetry," University of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature, 1920, pp. 21-57.

<sup>29</sup> The following lines in A are completely monosyllabic: 660, 667, 713, 743, 790, 800, 826, 909, 912; but there are many more (e.g., 723, 726-9, 734, 736, 739, 741, 834, 836-7, 841, 855, 857-8, 862-4, 867-8, 873-5, 878-9) that have eight monosyllables.

## BOOK X

BOOK X is devoted to the two years in which Wordsworth's enthusiasm for the Revolution was at its height, that is from mid- or late October, 1792, when he left Orleans for Paris, to late August, 1794, when he learned of the execution of Robespierre. As the biographical part of IX ends with the conversations with Beaupuy (who left Blois July 27), and as "Vaudracour and Julia" throws no light on the later history of Wordsworth's love, nothing is said in *The Prelude* about the last two and a half months of his life at Blois and Orleans. The title, "Residence in France," is applicable only to the first third of the book. Wordsworth's life between his return to England and his joyous departure for Racedown, with which *The Prelude* opens, is summarized in xiv. 349-54. Still another book, XIII, which traces his recovery and his development as a poet, describes the three days he spent in September or October, 1793, wandering over Salisbury Plain and refers to the composition of *Guilt and Sorrow*, a part of which was conceived at this time (see xiii. 312-378). (After leaving France he was a homeless wanderer, poor, often dependent, doubtless lonely, and certainly much disturbed by the course of the Revolution, by uncertainty as to his own future, and by thoughts of Annette and her child. He did not see his sister until a year after his return, that is, until February, 1794.) *The Prelude* very properly omits all of this except his concern for France, just as it says nothing of the matter which occupied much of his attention during his early days in London—the publication of his first two volumes of verse. Nor does it mention the sermons of Joseph Fawcett, to which he listened, or the appearance in February of *Political Justice*, which he may have read at this time and discussed with his radical associates. But what is much more strange is the absence of any reference to his prose pamphlet in defence of the Revolution, the *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff*, to which, although he never published it, he devoted much labor. It is well to remember that he had not yet reached the middle of his twenty-fifth year when the last event described in this book took place.

According to Professor de Selincourt (pp. xxxix-xl), x was composed, along with viii and xi and the greater part of vii, between mid-October and the end of December, 1804.

1-11. Like vi, this book opens with a description of autumn and with the poet's leaving the country for the city, and, in each case the loveliness of the scene was intensified for the young Wordsworth by wistful regret at leaving it and by eager anticipation of what lay ahead. The lines take on a deeper beauty and significance when it is realized that the farewell look which he cast upon the rich domains of the Loire was, though he little suspected it, also a farewell to Annette, whom he was not to see again for ten long years, a farewell to the ecstasy of youthful passion, and even to youth itself.

It is interesting to follow the development of this passage, rich in the mature beauty of the season it describes. Lines 4-5 were added in B and several changes were made in C, which, though ineffectual in themselves, were admirably developed in the final text. Yet in the process, the beautiful "Calm waters, gleams of sun, and breathless trees" (B 6) was lost. Another line omitted from the later texts is of significance since it tells us that Wordsworth left Orleans not to watch the Revolution in Paris but to return home: "I . . . turn'd my steps Their homeward way to England" (B 7-8). Such had certainly been his intention a little earlier, for he wrote Mathews on May 17, "I shall return to England in the autumn or the beginning of winter," and in a letter to his brother Richard of September 3 he said, "I shall be in town [London] during the course of the month of October." His stay of two months or more in Paris—it would have been much longer but for lack of funds—was due to a change in plan occasioned by his increased enthusiasm for the Revolution.

B 9. *the congregated Host*: Cf. "congregated waters," *Paradise Lost*, vii. 308.

13-15. A good figure.

17-24. Wordsworth's love of romance (see vii. 77-84 n.) comes out in these stately, Miltonic lines, which were developed in 1832 or 1839 from B 14-15. They are similar in style and imagery to viii. 75-81.

31-2. Apparently Wordsworth did not notice the unpleasant



alliteration in "State . . . stamp," "seal . . . security," in "free from . . . for" (45), in "progress passed The prison" (50-1), or in "some sort seeing" (124). See iii. 28 n.

44-7. The same idea is expressed four times in these lines. See ix. 112 n.

49-50. More compact and otherwise better expressed than B 38-40. The growth of the change may be traced in B<sup>2</sup> and C.

55-63. MS C has several interesting details that might well have been retained: the first, fourth, fifth, and last lines of the variant of A 46-9 and also the variants of A 55.

57-63. These lines of characteristic subtle self-analysis recall vi. 767-9; ix. A 23-5, 71-3; and perhaps iii. 30-5, 80-2. Yet the idea of the present passage is somewhat different since Wordsworth seems to refer here to the baffling sense of unreality that often arises in a place where one knows what has happened in the past but cannot realize, cannot feel it.

A 54-6. *But . . . felt most*: The sixteen successive monosyllables (cf. ii. 41-5 n.) and the alliteration "most mov'd" (see iii. 28 n.) were probably responsible for the elimination of A 55.

70-93. "Pressed on me" (72) and the vivid A 66 suggest the working of a powerful imagination; 87-8 may imply that this led to a terrifying dream. Lines 87b-90 are clearer than A 77b-9, and 87b-92 more vivid than A 77b-81.

93. An admirable line.

94-120. Although Louvet's speech was probably hawked about at least until November 5, when Robespierre answered it (and "recently pronounced" [103] would hardly mean "delivered yesterday"), the first morning on which it could have been sold was October 30. Yet one hesitates to deduce from this that Wordsworth arrived in Paris between October 29 and November 4. For it should be observed that on the preceding evening he had thought of the massacres of September 2-5 as "divided from me by one little month" (74) whereas, on an evening between October 29 and November 4, they would be almost if not exactly two months distant. Furthermore, he may not have meant by "that night" (63) and "The first" (C variant of A 55) the first night after his return to Paris; and if he did he might easily, twelve years later, have been mistaken.

120-3. This is not inconsistent with v. 192-7; Wordsworth means, "I am giving an account of the Revolution only as it affected my development as a typical poet."

124. *proper*: Own.

136. *reason*: Regarded by many of the revolutionists and by their philosophers as the key to all truth and progress (341-3).

138. The unpleasant piety of this line has crowded out the emphasis on plain living in B 121.

140. Perhaps a reference to *Acts*, ii. 2, 3, 5: the "sound . . . as of a rushing mighty wind" which accompanied "the gift of tongues," and likewise the men "out of every nation under heaven" who were dwelling in Jerusalem at the time.

142-5. Wordsworth had no doubts as to the ultimate success of the Revolution ("the end of things," 144) although he feared that its triumph might be unduly delayed and that in the meantime much harm might be done by extremists.

✓146-236. These lines, taken in connection with 134-42 but apparently contradicted by 225-8, indicate that Wordsworth wondered at times whether he, an outsider, might not become the leader whom France needed. Such an idea will seem less fantastic if we recall his confession that as a child "nothing" was

So welcome, no temptation half so dear  
As that which urged me to a daring feat. . . .  
With impulses that scarcely were by these  
Surpassed in strength, I heard of danger, met  
Or sought with courage; enterprize forlorn  
By one, sole keeper of his own intent,  
Or by a resolute few who for the sake  
Of glory, fronted multitudes in arms.

(*Recluse*, I. i. 703-20)

[By a final bit of tragic irony the leader for whom Wordsworth so earnestly looked proved to be the man he loathed—Napoleon!

154-90. One sentence thirty-six lines long. See v. 197-222 n.

156-60. A survival of that rationalistic uniformitarianism which was a marked feature of eighteenth-century thought. Deism, for example, was supposed to be a universal religion "transcendent to all local" beliefs and prejudices, and based on

the "one nature" which is shared by men of all races and all degrees of civilization. Wordsworth's remark that great objects are seen by humblest eyes recalls the belief of the Utilitarians that to the savage, uncorrupted by education and convention, all essential, universal truths must be clear.<sup>1</sup>

164-6. Substituted for A 147. "Firm sense" is ominously dropped from the final text. The variants in B<sup>2</sup>, C, and D are given on de S., 370.

A 149. See vi. 505 n.

168. *Society's unreasoning herd*: Not in A and probably not in Wordsworth's mind at the time, since he asserts that "in the People was my trust" (xi. 11). But see 213-16. The similar vii. 621 is a late addition.

173-5. Had Wordsworth forgotten the unmarried mother in Orleans?

179-81 first appear in D<sup>2</sup>; 182-90 in B<sup>2</sup>. Even if he should fail he would do right in following the voice of conscience.

187. *either sacrifice*: Presumably life or death (185), that is devoting one's life to a cause or dying for it.

188-90. Although against such a sacrifice our feeble human nature, earnest and blind, pleads for our obligations to others and our affection for them.

191. *truths*: Enumerated in 200-8; lines 193-200 are parenthetical. The entire passage shows how literary and theoretical in its origin Wordsworth's idealism was and how little it rested upon observation of men and conditions about him. But he was not yet twenty-three. Cf. ix. 364-89, 408-17.

205. *natural right*: A favorite subject of discussion at this time.

213-16. See 168 and n.; xii. 57-67.

215b-16a. A late addition meaning that the willingness of the people to follow false teaching is a sadder proof than their ignorance of their inability to govern themselves.

223-4. This observation, though it might be deduced from A 195-7, is not to be found in A or B, nor is the vivid image of 222. The excellent figure in 227-8 was added in 1832 or 1839.

225-8. Wordsworth here declares that he knew at the time how little he could do to help France—which seems inconsistent with the implications of 146-221.

229-31. According to his nephew's *Memoirs*, "If he had remained longer in the French capital, he would, in all probability, have fallen a victim among the Brissotins, with whom he was intimately connected" (I, 76-7).

236-45. This grandiose passage, which is marked by false diction and by the effort to be poetical, is not in A.

A 211-19, A 228-9, A 242-54. Omitted from the final text. A 215-19 introduces a good image and an idea not in the final text, but A devotes to negro emancipation more space than its slight influence on the poet warranted. With A 228-9 compare "the unity of all," ii. 221 and n. A 249-54 contains keen analysis; "foretasted" is vivid.

261. The pains taken to destroy slavery were superfluous since with the triumph of the Revolution it would disappear. Cf. xi. 189-94.

✓ 266-76. In xi. 173-88 Wordsworth explains more fully the nature of this shock, which, he declares, first threw him out of the pale of love, soured and corrupted his sentiments, diverted his affections and interests into new channels, and opened the way for intellectual errors. Thus he twice affirms that nothing, not the horrors of the September massacres nor the joy and remorse of his relations with Annette, had made an impression on him comparable to the effect of England's declaration of war.) The strength of this impression was due not so much to Wordsworth's deep patriotism as to the peculiarly local and associational sources of his spiritual life. The roots of his being were twined round the rocks of Westmoreland and Cumberland, and drew their nutriment from the lakes, the streams, and the mists among which he had grown up. It was with these and the dalesmen who lived among them that his poetry was mainly to deal. From all these he was suddenly "torn" (note 282 and 300) and "tossed about in whirlwind." A gulf had opened between his earlier life and his new interests, and a "most unnatural strife" ravaged his heart (A 251-2), since his exultation "when Englishmen by thousands were overthrown" (285-6) lay "at enmity with all the tenderest springs Of [his] enjoyments" (A 253-4). He felt strongly the importance of continuity in development. He wished his "days to be Bound each to each by natural piety,"—that is (Latin

*pietas*), he wished each day, each stage of growth, to be joined to the preceding by affection and reverence. The break in continuity caused by his years in France and in London and by his enthusiasm for the Revolution, for abstract principles, and for theory had much to do with his ensuing crisis.

276-81. Except for its prettiness an effective figure, developed from that in A 254-7.

282-99. Cf. 437-60 and n.

299. A vigorous line. Observe that Wordsworth tried "judgment" in place of "vengeance" but rejected it.

300-10. By depriving young men of their faith in England the government tore their roots, at a time when storms were fiercest, from the rock which would have steadied them. "The reference is chiefly to Pitt," writes Nowell Smith, who cites the letter to Sir George Beaumont of February 11, 1806, to show that Wordsworth thought that Pitt's political career was disfigured by personal ambition.

304. *worst losses*: It is hard to see how "the loss of the American colonies" (de S. note) could "wear The best of names." The meaning may rather be much the same as that of 309-10: the loss of ancient faith was called enlightenment or liberality and the loss of patriotism was termed universal benevolence or emancipation from insularity.

306-8. John the Baptist said of Jesus, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (*John*, iii. 30, cf. i. 30, *Luke*, iii. 16, etc.).

309. *ancient faith*: Moral principles, standards, attitude towards life, rather than religious beliefs. The loss of these last would not have troubled Wordsworth in 1804.

312-14. A good figure, better expressed in the final text than in A.

315-30. The rimed fragment which Professor de Selincourt has entitled "At the Isle of Wight, 1793" (*P. W., Youth*, pp. 307-8, 374) gives a more vigorous expression to Wordsworth's feelings on these occasions.

327. *seldom heard by me*: Why not "Which I seldom heard?" Cf. iii. 74. The diction of the preceding five lines is unduly Latinic and grandiose.

331-4. "In the whole of Wordsworth's account of the Revolution, there is nothing with more insight than this wise

political judgment." Wordsworth "points with statesman-like sagacity to the one fact which, as every candid historian now sees, provides a main explanation, though not the justification, of the Reign of Terror."<sup>2</sup>

336-50. "One of Wordsworth's great merits is that he forces us to see that these causes [of the Terror] were complicated."<sup>3</sup> Wordsworth enumerates eight groups who, for widely different reasons, supported the Jacobin extremists. As to 339-41 see 437-60 n. "Vengeful retribution" (341) is more cautious than "anger and . . . vengeance" (A 318).

360. An anacoluthon. Wordsworth begins the clause as if he intended to conclude it with "all were torn."

364-74. A good figure diffusely expressed. Here A is better.

382. *composure*: Settlement [of her difficulties], i. e. death. The word may have been used for the sake of contrast with "agony."

386-9. A troublesome passage. Wordsworth does not, as might be expected, distinguish those who never hoped, those who lost hope, and those who continued to hope, but, after referring to the first class in 385, omits the second and in the third (who continued to believe in the Revolution) distinguishes a small group who still had faith in man. These last he speaks of as "flattered," as if the kind of faith in human nature bred by the Revolution was false, a point of view borne out by xiii. 16-39. With 387-9 compare 393-6.

391-3. Hercules, while still an infant in his cradle, was attacked by two snakes, which he throttled with his hands.

✓393-6. (The victory of France over her enemies was as it should be but it brought little comfort to those whose interest in the Revolution was not political but arose from their faith in human nature. This faith, it should be remembered, was shaken not only by the wanton cruelty of the Terror but by the perfidy of the English government. It received a staggering blow a year or more later when the French, "become oppressors in their turn . . . changed a war of self-defence For one of conquest" (xi. 206-8). With the shattering of his hopes of the Revolution and the undermining of his belief in man, Wordsworth's world was falling in ruins about him.)

393-5. Two and a third lines made up of monosyllables! Cf. ii. 41-5 n.

402-15. Mr. Harper believes that these lines reflect the fears that beset Wordsworth during a secret visit made to Paris in September-October, 1793. Mr. Herbert Read interprets 414-15 as remorse for the treatment of Annette.<sup>4</sup>

416-36. As is often the case in *The Prelude*, the connection of this passage with the one that precedes it is not clear until a number of lines have been read, not until 428 and not fully until 435-6: how different were the results, the evidences, of this absorption in the improvement of human society from those that marked my early yielding myself to Nature.

Wordsworth seems here to imply what he would hardly have maintained: that because the service of man was attended by discouragement, sleeplessness, and "ghastly visions" it was therefore less noble than the service of Nature, which brought only joy. The nobility of a cause cannot be judged by the emotions called forth by devotion to it. But noble as in many ways was his devotion to the Revolution, it was not founded on "right reason" and his deep discouragement was the inevitable result of "impatient or fallacious hopes . . . [the] heat of passion . . . excessive zeal . . . vain conceits . . . Of self-applauding intellect . . . over-fondly set On throwing off incumbrances" (xiii. 22-34).

416-17. Presumably the period described in ii. 276 ff. is referred to; ii. 386-418 would hardly be spoken of as "at first," nor seventeen (ii. 386) as "early youth" (A 382); 416 seems, however, to be a correction of A 382 and may refer to the later period. Cf. also *The Excursion*, i. 108-300.

417-20. For the violence of all Wordsworth's feelings see the latter part of the note to iv. 316-19 and viii. A 841-2 n. The "oppression" of the "strong And holy passion" for nature which "overcame" him recalls the picture, probably autobiographic, of the youth of the Wanderer, who was "o'erpowered"

By Nature; by the turbulence subdued  
Of his own mind; by mystery and hope,  
And the first virgin passion of a soul  
Communing with the glorious universe.

(*Excursion*, i. 282-6, cf. 136-9)

A 386-8. The transcendence of the Deity is here clearly affirmed.

A 391. *all these*: "Every kind of life" (A 388) except man. Man's preeminence is insisted upon also in viii. 485-94 and xiv. 448-54 (see notes).

427. *reason*: To which he owes his preeminence. See iv. A 296 n.

428. *sequestered*: Kept by itself apart from man's other powers.

430. *countenance*: Demeanor, behavior.

434. *Tumult*: Cf. vii. 44-8 n.; *fear*: see Chapter III.

434-6. Contrast 384-415.

W 437-60. The final text of this difficult passage is more obscure and involved than the earlier, perhaps because Wordsworth hesitated to express frankly an idea which is opposed to the spirit of Jesus although not to that of the Hebrew prophets, to whom he refers, nor to his previously mentioned feeding "on the day of vengeance yet to come" (299), nor to the "anger and . . . vengeance" of Providence (A 317-18), nor to the line, later removed, in "Imagination—ne'er," "Yea, Carnage is thy daughter," nor to the "Dread Minister of wrath!" paragraph in "To Enterprise" (104-18). (The thought appears to be that as the Hebrew prophets, though inspired, derived a grim human satisfaction from beholding the punishments which they had predicted would fall upon sinful cities, so I, in their spirit, lifted up at times above pity and sorrow, found something to glory in, saw in the suffering of those fierce days punishment in accord with sublime laws; and even in the chastisement which I could not understand I felt awe and a kind of sympathy with the terrible manifestations of divine power.) Lines 437b-9, 446b, 447, 449-52, 456 (omitted in de S.), 457a, 458-60 are not in A; A 411-13, A 418-19, A 425 are not in the final text; 440b-441a are substituted for A 403b-404a.

A 412. *rage and dog-day heat*: More vivid than the 1850 text.

446. *consummate*: Consummated.

455. In the first edition of de S., between 455 and 456 the line "Not only acquiescences of faith" was dropped, making the number of each subsequent line of the 1850 text of this book one less than it should be.

458. *Motions*: Inward prompting or impulses, emotions, as



in viii. A 80. Before A 418 (a clumsy, unrhythmical line), "I felt" is understood.

461. "Music" is emphatic; there was beauty, melody, to be heard amid the dissonance of the tempest.

470. *Nature's*: Most persons would have written "God's"; the reference is not to the out-of-doors but to the general ordering of the universe.

475-6. *wild belief . . . false philosophy*: Indifference to the sanctity of human life, false ideas of religion, of the relations between the sexes, and of the general conduct of life which purported to be derived from "liberty, equality, fraternity." Since Wordsworth was not as yet particularly interested in abstract theory whether French or Godwinian and would not at this time have called such theory "false," he must here have reference to irregularities of conduct and to the theories of life by which they were justified which shocked the English people.)

477-80. An effective figure. France was paying the penalty for ages of wrong-doing and for the ignorance in which the common people had been allowed to grow up—ignorance which precluded the wise use of their newly acquired power. Cf. "At Bologna," 1-5:

Ah why deceive ourselves! by no mere fit  
Of sudden passion roused shall men attain  
True freedom where for ages they have lain  
Bound in a dark abominable pit,  
With life's best sinews more and more unknit.

493-504. This passage differs from A 452-60 through a number of slight changes made in 1832 or 1839, all of which are improvements except the cacophonous "that did then" (504).

511-603. Although *The Prelude* opens with a walk probably taken in September, 1795, this incident, which happened about August 20, 1794, is the latest narrated in the body of the poem. Subsequent events—Napoleon's summoning the Pope to crown him (December 2, 1804, xi. 359-60) and the death of John Wordsworth (February 5, 1805, xiv. 419) are the latest—are, however, referred to and later developments are traced.

A 467-9. *have . . . Tribe of*: Eighteen successive monosyllables (cf. ii. 41-5 n.). The A<sup>2</sup> variant of A 468 (de S., 581) is a wretched line.

A 472-7. In his note on "Elegiac Stanzas . . . Peele Castle," appended to a reprint of Wordsworth's *Poems in Two Volumes* (ii, 225), Mr. Thomas Hutchinson writes:

The Peele Castle of these stanzas is the Piel at the southern extremity of Furness, opposite Walney Isle, and hard by the village of Rampside, where, says Bp. Christ. Wordsworth [I, 299], "the Poet spent four weeks of a college vacation at the house of his cousin, Mrs. Barker." Prof. Knight (*Eversley Wordsworth*, iii, p. 57) assigns this visit to 1794, but gives no reason for so doing. Wordsworth's college vacations fell in the years 1788-1790; but several considerations indicate 1794 as the more likely year of the visit.

A 472-5, A 489-99. The omission of most of these lines from the final text illustrates Wordsworth's desire to eliminate from his poem the unessential and the merely personal.

528-31. A late addition. With 528-9 compare "Resolution and Independence," 22-5:

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the might  
Of joy in minds that can no further go,  
As high as we have mounted in delight  
In our dejection do we sink as low.

530. *even*: "Now," which occurs in the D<sup>2</sup> variant of A 488-93 and which would make better sense, may be what Wordsworth originally wrote.

531-52. See ix. 288 n.

532-3. *I turned aside To seek*: Seemingly a contradiction of A 490, "I had chanced to find," just as 571, "no salutation given," appears to contradict A 533-4, "I . . . inquired . . . he replied" (likewise A<sup>2</sup> and C). Possibly both changes are corrections, but they suggest that Wordsworth invented or that his imagination unconsciously supplied some of the many details which he enumerates in his descriptions of past incidents or scenes. See ix. 155-61 n. and pp. 280-2 above.

543-4. Cf. viii. A 841-2 n.

548-52. Despite his absorption in politics and social reform, Wordsworth now thinks of himself as a poet. His notable

experiences in Sarum's Plain (xiii. 312-78) had occurred a year before (August or September, 1793) and he had recently completed or was still engaged upon *Guilt and Sorrow*.

553-4. Less flowing than A 516-18 owing to the omission of "Without me and within" and "or communed with," which were presumably removed because they are implied in "all that I saw or felt."

554-61. This description though pleasing in itself (561 is an admirable line) is too long and much too detailed for the purpose it is intended to serve. Our attention is distracted and we are not helped to visualize the scene of this important announcement by eight lines devoted to the scarcely-visible remains of an island chapel, especially as the announcement itself is crowded into six lines of awkward prose. See pp. 15-16 above.

568. *Heaved*: The substitution of "Heaved" for "Was" (A 530), though merely the change of one monosyllable for another, makes a remarkable difference.

571-2. According to the punctuation of the 1850 text, which is frequently mistaken, 572 modifies "given" and not, as in A 534-5, "replied." This makes rather better sense than taking "no salutation given" by itself and 572 as modifying "Cried" (573).

571. Cf. 532-3 n.

576-93. Excellent evidence that "in me, confidence was unimpaired" (xi. 7).

576. More pious, seemly, and solemn but less vivid and probably less true than the "glee" and "vengeance" of A 540-1.

583. *They*: "He and his supporters" (575).

586. *their own helper*: The "river of Blood" (584). The figure, which is continued to the end of the line, is apt since it was two rivers, the Alpheus and the Peneus, which Hercules diverted into the stables of King Augeas in order to cleanse them.

A 556. The unpleasant alliteration, "though through," was eliminated in A<sup>2</sup>. Cf. A 54-6 n.

✓ 595-603. We may apply to these lines Wordsworth's comment on his second visit to another scene already memorable,

"So feeling comes in aid Of feeling" (xii. 269-70). (For the beauty of this passage is due in part to the reader's recollection of the beauty of the earlier one (ii. 115-37) and to his wistful sense of the contrast between the glad animal spirits of the first occasion and the shadows overhanging this one.)

601-2. The dash after "sea," which presumably was inserted without manuscript authority by the editors of the 1850 *Prelude* (see de S., xx), would be much better after "home."

601. *their*: Since "we" is used in 603, "our" would seem to be the proper pronoun.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See A. O. Lovejoy's "The Parallel of Deism and Classicism," *Modern Philology*, XXIX (February, 1932), 288-90.

<sup>2</sup> Viscount Grey, "Wordsworth's 'Prelude,'" *Fallodon Papers*, Boston, 1926, p. 165, A. V. Dicey, *The Statesmanship of Wordsworth*, Oxford, 1917, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> Dicey, p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> Harper, "Did Wordsworth Defy the Guillotine?" *Quarterly Review*, CCXLVIII, 254-64; Read, *Wordsworth*, New York, 1931, pp. 101-2.

## BOOK XI (A X. 566 sq.)

IN MSS A, B, and C, XI formed part of x, which was thus more than twice as long as several of the other books. Presumably because of this disproportionate length x was divided into two and, as the division first appears in MS D, it must have been made about 1828. Yet since in Z, an early manuscript, XII is numbered XII and not XI (as in A, B, and C), the final division may have been the original one (see de S., pp. xxiv-xxv).

(Book XI deals with a single momentous year: from late August, 1794, when Wordsworth learned of the execution of Robespierre, to late September, 1795, when, at Racedown, he began to recover from the crisis of doubt and discouragement; that is, from the middle of his twenty-fifth to the middle of his twenty-sixth year.) But lines 75 to 188 turn back to 1792 and retrace the development of his enthusiasm for the Revolution through February, 1793, when England declared war. The last one hundred lines (nearly a quarter of the book) are devoted to Coleridge. (It will thus be seen that Wordsworth concentrates into some 250 lines the waning of his enthusiasm for France, the growth of his interest in Godwinian rationalism, its culmination in despair, and the beginning of his recovery. Except the last, to which he returned, these were unpleasant topics and apparently on this account they were treated, despite their importance, with brevity and studied vagueness. He may well have thought that for the purposes of his poem he had said enough. Two events of this year, his receiving a legacy from Raisley Calvert and his tramping from Bristol to Racedown, are referred to or described elsewhere in *The Prelude* (xiv. 354-69, i. 1-107).)

According to Professor de Selincourt (pp. xxxix-xl), XI was composed between the middle of October and the end of December, 1804; yet certain passages, such as 105-44, may be several years earlier.

1-7. Lines 1-2 and 7 are a distinct improvement over A, but 5-6 are more flowery and less clear than A 572-3.

7. The wording of this line in all the texts but especially in A 574, "The same belief I . . . retain'd" (cf. A 580-1, later omitted), seems to disprove Professor de Selincourt's remark: "The fall of Robespierre at the end of July *reawakened* his faith in the immediate future" (p. 585, my italics).

✓ 11-12. Earlier Wordsworth's hope had been in a leader (see x. 123-221). Undoubtedly he still distrusted the mob (x. 168, 213-16) as well as the Jacobins who controlled it but looked to the middle class, whom he had come to know on his first trip as well as during his residence in Orleans and Blois.

17. See vi. 505 n.

18-19. The A<sup>2</sup>C version is free from the wordiness of A 587-91 and the obscurity of the final text, although the conviction described in 13-17 can hardly be termed an intuition.

20-1. These lines and the similar xiii. 46-7 express the theme of many of Wordsworth's poems. "At home" is contrasted with "external" (13).

22. *Resistance*: Of the French to the allies.

24-7. Since England "remained Untired" in her opposition to the truth, France, who had seen a vision not granted to her enemies, would surely persevere. It is likely that Wordsworth distrusted such accounts of the Revolution as were received in England and he may well have known little of internal conditions in France or of the feeling of her people. Apparently he had not yet learned or had not thought of applying to the young republic the truth that it is "the most difficult of tasks to *keep* Heights which the soul is competent to gain" (*Excursion*, iv. 138-9). The entire paragraph is a subtle and illuminating analysis of English liberal thought at this time.

A 600-5, A 614-18, A 624-8. Omitted from final text. Lines 41-4 are not in A.

A 605. *It*: The "creature" of A 602, that is, France.

27-34. Its very lack of experience enables youth to perceive more clearly than manhood can what conduct is instinctive and "natural" rather than traditional or customary. Thus at a time when "habit, custom, law" had been swept aside, and new paths were being sought, youth, unhampered by precedent, was better fitted than age to discover the methods which were in closest accord with "nature" and reason (cf. ix. 331-9).

"Nature" is here used in the sense of "the innate, spontaneous, instinctive, unreflective, in contrast with that which is acquired by experience, individual or social, or depends upon deliberation and reasoning."<sup>1</sup> Note the interesting clause in A 608 but later dropped and the variant of this in A<sup>3</sup>. See also iii. 557 n. and, for "reason," iv. A 296 n. Professor Garrod affirms that the language of 31b-4 "is unmistakably that of a disciple of Rousseau" (p. 88).

A 616. *them*: "Events" (A 615).

35-9. The story of the building of Babel in *Genesis*, xi. 3-9 comes shortly after the account of the deluge but is not causally connected with it.

39. *compeers*: An inappropriate Miltonism which Wordsworth uses ten times (cf. iii. 296; *Excursion*, viii. 581, ix. 431). "Ardent Comrades" of the A<sup>2</sup> variant of A 614-18 is better.

44-73. Wordsworth was misled (1) by the blindness of the opponents of France, to whose cries of "Wolf, wolf" he paid no heed since these men interpreted all news of the republic as indications "of utter ruin," and (2) by the actions of the British government, which seemed bent on destroying all justice and liberty.

44. *we*: I and "my compeers." A has "I," "my," "myself" throughout this passage.

58. Such reality as well as the merely personal (60) Wordsworth thought unsuitable for poetry. See pp. 271-3, 384 above and v. 195 n.

60. *personal*: Wordsworth's individual scorn or scorn of certain persons?

67. Once again, "Ten low words"; cf. ii. 41-5 n.

69. A 653-6a, for which 70-2a is substituted, is not clear since "Giants . . . reach" may be the object of "imitate" and "avoid" but, in view of 69, is probably in opposition to "they" (A 655), the subject of "leagu'd." Apparently in both texts "those who had previously sown death" is implied as the object of "imitate" and "avoid." In A "vermin" is contrasted with "Giants," "weapons and . . . warfare" with "impiety."

✓ 74-188. Although even without 173-5 a little reflection would make clear that Wordsworth here turns back (see xii.



75-6 n.) to 1792, when his interest in the Revolution was first aroused, yet this retracing of steps is confusing and doubtless has misled many readers. The confusion is the greater because the most famous passage in this book devoted mainly to disillusion and despair is a lyric description of the bliss which attended the Revolutionary dawn. Yet if old ground is here re-surveyed it is from a new point of view. Wordsworth has reached the time when his interest shifted from the concrete to the abstract, from the events of the French Revolution to the philosophy which in part lay behind it and to which in part it gave birth. In order that this transition may be better understood, he goes back to the time when his interest in "civil polity" was first aroused. Lines 75-98 therefore correspond to ix. 198-262 and 98-172 to ix. 321-430, 501-41. Here, however, the emphasis is on theory—political, economic, and social—and, later, on the development of his theory after Beaupuy left Blois (July 27, 1792).

79-82.

Two knights coming from different directions stopped in sight of a trophy shield, one side of which was gold and the other silver. Like the disputants about the colour of the cameleon, the knights disputed about the metal of the shield, and from words they proceeded to blows. Luckily a third knight came up at this juncture, to whom the point of dispute was referred, and the disputants were informed that the shield was silver on one side and gold on the other. This story is from Beaumont's *Moralities*.<sup>2</sup>

83-6. Illustrations of Wordsworth's approaching human nature from the golden side of the shield. He had hitherto observed mainly (1) what is *best* in individual man (what is wise in passion, sublime in power), (2) what is *benevolent* in small societies, (3) what is *great* in large ones. In A 669 he included a fourth group, the family, which (together with A 671b-3) he later omitted.

87-98. (Wordsworth's idealistic conception of life was a matter of feeling not of reasoned conviction—for of evil he had only such general knowledge as suffices for ordinary conditions—and so did not come unscathed through the ordeal by fire to which it was shortly to be subjected.)

88. *they*: The omission of A 672-3 has left "they," which must refer to "these beliefs" understood, without an antecedent.

✓105-44. Since these justly famous lines are usually read (as Wordsworth himself published them) apart from their context, it is not generally realized that they refer less to the Revolution as a whole than to the enthusiasm aroused by the Revolution in theories of government. The two are indeed inseparable since the joy and hope of the period arose largely from the changes that were being made in the "laws, and fashion of the State"; it was by these that liberty and equality were to be established and from these the Revolutionary discussions seldom strayed far. Wordsworth and Beaupuy had talked about them from the first. Yet this passage is much less general and deals more specifically with political science than does ix. 390-417 or the panegyrics of Hazlitt in the *Round Table* and the *Memoirs of Holcroft*,<sup>8</sup> and is quite different from Shelley's "The world's great age begins anew." It is not speculations

On rational liberty, and hope in man,  
Justice and peace

(ix. 395-6)

that "took . . . The attraction of a country in romance" but the "forbidding ways Of custom, law, and statute." And certainly the "pleasant exercise" of 105 must refer to what immediately precedes; that is, to meditation on the "management Of Nations . . . on their Laws And on the Constitution of the State."<sup>4</sup>

✓113-15. This is the "Reason" of the French Revolutionists and seems very unlike the impersonal and dispassionate examination of the facts and weighing of the consequences by which Godwin, who distrusted enchantresses, wished all action to be controlled. Yet Godwin's "Reason" was a child of the Revolution and, though less vague, less idealistic, and far more patient, was as strongly *a priori* and theoretical as its parent and as blind to reality.

✓125-32. Despite the dash in 128, presumably not in the manuscripts, it is clear from A 713 that these lines describe one class, the "lofty" (136). They and "the meek" (136),—the

two are not to be confused with the inert and the lively (123-4),—seem more like different sides of Wordsworth's nature than groups of real men numerous enough to constitute any considerable part of the followers of the Revolution. The first class would seem to be made up of artists whose creative powers (see ii. 245-61 and n., ii. 358-74) are apparently referred to in 126-32. The period after "right" (131) is an error. "The grandest objects of the sense" (129) would normally mean "the grandest works of nature and of man," while 130-2 would probably limit it to natural objects only, such as mountains; but it is doubtful if many who "had stirred Among" these were active in the Revolution.

133-5. Lines 133-4 seem to be contrasted with 126-8 and 135 with 129.

134-5. Whose schemes were limited to their inner world.

139-41. Utopias, it should be remembered, are mainly devoted to the description of ideal systems of government, especially their social aspects—hours and conditions of labor, the holding of property, marriage, education—which in most ideal commonwealths are controlled by the government.<sup>5</sup> See ix. 501-41 n.

140. *subterranean fields*: Wordsworth apparently refers to *Nicolai Klimii Iter Subterraneum novam telluris theoriam ac historiam quintae Monarchiae adhuc nobis incognitae exhibens* (1741) by the celebrated Danish writer, Ludwig von Hölberg. According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* this poem was "three several times translated into Danish, ten times into German, thrice into Swedish, thrice into Dutch, thrice into English, twice into French, twice into Russian and once into Hungarian." It reached a fourth Latin edition in 1766, was included in the *Voyages Imaginaires* (ed. C. G. T. Garnier, Amsterdam and Paris, 1787-95), and, as it frequently appears in catalogues of second-hand books, must have been popular in England.<sup>6</sup>

141. *secreted island*: This phrase would fit the Atlantis of Plato and most other ideal commonwealths: those, for example, pictured in More's *Utopia* (1516), Campanella's *Civitas Solis* (1623), Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627), Harrington's *Oceana* (1656).

✓ 142-4. Cf. xiii. 356-70. An admirable expression of the sane, solid, thoroughly English side of Wordsworth which in its extreme form becomes matter-of-factness.

146-52. An admirable figure.

✓ 153-72. (Wordsworth was still a trusting, unsophisticated "child of Nature" (168) since he still saw only the golden side of the shield (79-82). The phrase "child of Nature" had wide currency in the later eighteenth century in connection with the vogue of primitivism. Here it means a kindly, trusting individual in whom the spontaneous, instinctive, and unreflective dominate; one who knows little of what is acquired by experience or reasoning. Wordsworth may also have external nature vaguely in mind, as he does when he employs a similar phrase in *Descriptive Sketches* (1793), 520-8:

Once Man entirely free, alone and wild,  
Was bless'd as free—for he was Nature's child.  
He, all superior but his God disdain'd,  
Walk'd none restraining, and by none restrain'd,  
Confess'd no law but what his reason taught,  
Did all he wish'd, and wish'd but what he ought. . . .  
Ev'n so, by vestal Nature guarded, here [in Switzerland] . . .

154. *pleasant* is emphatic.

✓ 159-63. A 743-8 is clearer. (Wordsworth was still undisturbed by evidences of the worst desires on the part of both conservatives and radicals since he realized on the one hand that the conservatives naturally thought as they had been taught to think [also, in A<sup>2</sup>, that the privileges to which they were accustomed, though blinding their judgments, gave charm to their lives], and that an evil system which is old has its rights since men have grown accustomed to it and have come to depend on it; on the other hand he saw that the radicals were bound to go to extremes and to commit excesses.)

160. The meaning will be clearer if the dash is disregarded and "to see" is supplied after "taught," and "not uninformed that" is understood before "Antiquity."

✓ 165-7. Another good image. The Revolution, like a mountain top, had its drawbacks but the view it afforded was worth the discomforts of the cold wind. Wordsworth was singularly tolerant towards the excesses of the Revolution, just as he was,

throughout his life, towards impulsive wrongdoing.<sup>7</sup> But see 214-22 n.

171. "them," that is "affections" (169), is understood after "losing."

173. Since England declared war shortly after Wordsworth's return, lines 153-72 must picture Wordsworth's state of mind when he arrived in England. Presumably 105-52 refers more particularly to the months between February or March and October, when he was at Blois and Orleans.

✓ 176-83. When contrasted with 153-9, lines 176-8 suggest melancholy and misanthropy. To "false conclusions" (182) A 767 adds "of the intellect"; that is, the souring of Wordsworth's affections and the weakening of the tie which bound him to his early days and deepest loves upset his stability and thus opened the way to errors of the intellect (see x. 266-76 n.).

178b-9. Compare 171-2, to which "as hitherto" probably refers.

182-3. *as gross . . . more dangerous*: As those to which the Revolution itself had given birth.

✓ 183-5. Undoubtedly the "pride" which was now a "shame" refers to Wordsworth's feeling for his native land, his pride in being an Englishman; just as "my likings and my loves" refers to his love for England, which had given place to love for the Revolution; his patriotism, which had been displaced by internationalism; and his love of the quiet, simple, unassuming things of life, which was crowded out by his interest in politics and in political science. Furthermore it seems probable that his faith in man was shaken by England's declaration of war and her treatment of Horn Tooke, Thelwall, and the like, and later by the French becoming oppressors and "losing sight of all Which they had struggled for" (208-9). To be sure, in A 831-2 he says he never had "thought ill of human kind" but it may be significant that these lines were dropped from the final text; what seems to be their meaning is contradicted by the Z variant of xii. A 48 (which refers to this time), by xiii. 48-50, and perhaps by 176-8 of the present book, which suggest misanthropy. See also de S., 558, lines 194-204.

✓ 188-205. As the clause "meantime . . . no more" is, in both texts, separated by only a colon from the clause which tells of

affections diverted into new channels, and as Wordsworth says not "lent" but "*had* lent" (191), it looks as if the paragraph division in line 194 were misleading and that the line of thought were approximately as follows: "My pride in England became a shame, my affections and interests were changed, and I was adrift. Accordingly when events took a less encouraging turn and, losing their novelty, interested me less, I began to pay attention to the theories, some of them wild enough, which had been afloat from the first but to which I had hitherto 'but lent a careless ear.' I now turned to them as offering a reasoned and permanent basis of my hopes.")

(The attention to theory, which was stimulated by the disquieting turn of events in France (194-7), received further impetus when it became apparent that the Republic was forsaking its principles and entering on a war of conquest. As a result, "opinions" came to seem "the very being of the immortal soul" (219-22) and Wordsworth was increasingly attracted by the rationalism of the day, whether French or Godwinian, since it was supposed to be based not on the shifting sands of passing events and human emotions but on eternal, abstract truth (203-5).)

188. *heart*: See Chapter II and viii. A 841-2 n.

189. *wild theories*: There is no suggestion that these were the theories which Wordsworth afterwards adopted for a time; lines 191-4 (cf. x. 253-62) imply that they dealt with the relief of the oppression under which the multitude labored. Since the tense of "*had* lent" implies a period previous to England's declaration of war (February 11, 1793), with the effect of which the earlier part of this sentence is concerned, and since when this declaration was made Wordsworth had been in England less than two months (perhaps only one), he is pretty clearly referring to theories current when he was in France. How soon he read even parts of *Political Justice* is uncertain for, though it was published in February, 1793, it was much too expensive a book for him to buy.

190. Substituted for A 776, which makes clear that he *was* familiar with the general tenor of these theories; indeed, one might deduce as much from the final text, which says they were "sedulously urged."

195. *these*: "Events" (194) in France, which, to Wordsworth, had hitherto proved the soundness of the revolutionary principles. "Hope . . . object" (202-3) seems to mean much the same thing.

✓ 199-203. Wordsworth's enthusiasm for the Revolution had rested chiefly on faith, hope, and other intuitions (A 587-8) and "sentiments"; these could no longer hold their ground before the growth of his analytical and critical powers and of his knowledge of political science, through which the Revolution and the principles underlying it came to be "understood By reason" (87-8). The entire paragraph is marked by keen self-analysis.

✓ 206-22. In the final text, on which interpretations have hitherto been based, this paragraph has been so modified by the dropping of "somewhat" and "it is true" (A 798) and the addition of "anger," "disappointment," "resentment . . . mortified presumption" (212, 214-16) that it gives an impression quite different from what it originally conveyed. As we know that Wordsworth eventually renounced the Revolution and all its works and as we learn here of his anger and resentment towards it, we naturally conclude that this was the time when, completely disillusioned, he turned against the French. Yet a careful reading of the passage in its original form will make clear that it really says something almost the opposite—that, despite the sins of the Republic, he was still loyal to it. His words are

Vex'd inly somewhat, it is true, and sore;  
But not dismay'd, nor taking to the shame  
Of a false Prophet; but, rous'd up I stuck  
More firmly to old tenets.

That such was the true state of affairs is made the more likely by Professor de Selincourt's cogent argument (pp. 585-6). "that Wordsworth is referring to the close of 1794 and early months of 1795," taken in connection with the poet's own assertions: "After Buonaparte had violated the Independence of Switzerland [1798], my heart turned against him, and against the Nation that could submit to be the Instrument of such an outrage," and "after the subjugation of Switzerland, and not till

then, [had the war with France] begun to be regarded by the body of the people, as indeed both just and necessary; and this justice and necessity were by none more clearly perceived, or more feelingly bewailed, than by those who had most eagerly opposed the war in its commencement, and who continued most bitterly to regret that this nation had ever borne a part in it."<sup>8</sup> The words "I read her doom" (211) offer no difficulty since they refer not to the Revolution but to Liberty. The French had abandoned liberty but their enemies had forced them to act as they did and at any rate much good might still come from them. It is thus that lovers of liberty who have made the best of wars of conquest and dictatorships in earlier or later times have argued. It may be that Wordsworth was less "dismayed" because he was coming to believe that the Revolution had made a mistake in attempting to accomplish its objects through changes in the government before the people had reached a point where they were capable of governing themselves. Godwin had pointed out:

The only method according to which social improvements can be carried on, with sufficient prospect of an auspicious event, is, when the improvement of our institutions advances, in a just proportion to the illumination of the public understanding. . . . Imperfect institutions . . . cannot long support themselves, when they are generally disapproved of, and their effects truly understood. There is a period, at which they may be expected to decline and expire, almost without an effort. . . . When such a crisis has arrived, not a sword will need to be drawn, not a finger to be lifted up in purposes of violence.<sup>9</sup>

It is worthy of note that in the next paragraph Wordsworth tells us "This was the time" when he sought to

Build social freedom on its only basis,  
The freedom of the individual mind. (A 825-6)

(The changes made in revision may perhaps best be explained by supposing that when Wordsworth first wrote the paragraph he wished to emphasize that he was "not dismayed" by the change in France, but that on revising the book some ten or fifteen years later he thought he had not said enough about the anger and disappointment he had felt at the time and therefore changed A 798 and added 214-16 without being aware of the



misconception to which these modifications might give rise. But see 245-6 n.

209-11. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, iv. 996-1014 (my italics):

The Eternal, to prevent such horrid fray,  
Hung forth in Heaven his golden *scales* . . .  
    . . . In these he put two weights,  
The sequel each of parting and of fight:  
The latter quick up flew, and kicked the beam;  
Which Gabriel spying thus bespake the Fiend:  
    . . . For proof look up,  
And *read thy lot* in yon celestial sign,  
    . . . The Fiend looked up, and knew  
His *mounted scale* aloft: nor more; but fled.

Cf. also *Iliad*, viii. 69-72, xxii. 209-11; *Aeneid*, xii. 725-7.

✓ 214-22. In an important letter to Mathews of June, 1794 (see also that of May 23, 1794) Wordsworth expresses the political views he held a few months before the time here described. They are more moderate in themselves and in the way they are put forward than the present passage would lead us to expect—perhaps through fear of alarming Mathews. Here are a few:

The destruction of those Institutions which I condemn appears to me to be hastening on too rapidly. I recoil from the bare idea of a Revolution; yet, if our conduct with reference both to foreign and domestic policy continues such as it has been for the last two years, how is that dreadful event to be averted? . . . After this need I add that I am a determined enemy to every species of violence? . . . I deplore the miserable situation of the French; and think we can only be guarded from the same scourge by the undaunted efforts of good men in propagating with unremitting activity those doctrines . . .

A 805, A<sup>2</sup>C variant. "They" of the first line (apparently copied by mistake from "they had" immediately below) should be "it."

✓ 219. *opinions*: Not affections (love of nature or of man), not passions (of which he was "sick," A 835), not "the unassuming things that hold A silent station in this beauteous world," not action, but theories, governmental policies, abstract ideas—the product of the intellect. The discussion of these was heated (see 218-19 and A<sup>2</sup> variant of A 803).

223-58. This development is told again in xii. 44-74 and xii. A 121-37.

224. *speculative schemes*: Though too vague, substituted for "Philosophy" (A 807) because Wordsworth seems to have had in mind something closer to ethics, sociology, economics, and government than to what is usually called philosophy. The accepted interpretation of the lines that follow is that they refer specifically to Godwinism, rather than to rationalism or Jacobinism in general including Godwinism, as seems to me more probable. It should be remembered (1) that the external evidence that Wordsworth was strongly influenced by Godwinism is very slight; (2) that Godwin is never mentioned in *The Prelude* and very rarely in Wordsworth's letters or in reports of his conversation; (3) that there is nothing in his letters of this period to suggest Godwinism rather than Jacobinism; (4) that there is nothing in *Political Justice* that Wordsworth might not have met elsewhere;<sup>10</sup> and (5) that much of what is usually termed Godwinism is likely to have become familiar to him in France or in England before he read Godwin's book. It is striking that *The Prelude* not only fails to mention Godwin but that it does not imply that any one writer or system gained its author's allegiance. Now there was nothing disgraceful or contemptible about Godwin or his able and widely-discussed book; and Wordsworth's silence about both, in view of his confession that he had been a radical and a rationalist, would most naturally be taken as indicating that they had not influenced him strongly. He may, to be sure, have felt that by mentioning Godwin he would make his account unduly personal and thus less typical of the development through which the youth of England was passing. But as a matter of fact Wordsworth's contemporaries were presumably more Godwinian than he since, through his residence in France, he had enjoyed an opportunity denied most young Englishmen of becoming familiar with the ideas of *Political Justice* before that work appeared.

✓ 225-7. To remove the consideration of the amelioration of mankind from the realm of the emotions and place it on a nobler, an enduring foundation (cf. 248-50 [A 833-5]). "The farther men seemed to him from truth and happiness, the

farther he withdrew from the real world to bury himself in that of abstract thought, where the irony of events could no longer exasperate by its inconsistency with theory, nor an illogical reality confront the logical mind with its discrepancies and incoherence" (Legouis trs., p. 259). From what follows it is clear that Wordsworth came to realize (1) that this could not be done, that in the fields with which he was then concerned there is no such thing as pure reason since our reason is profoundly affected by our feelings and by "infirmities of nature, time, and place" (239); and (2) that even if this were possible it would be foolish since the feelings are themselves a source of wisdom as well as an invaluable corrective to the intellect,—inasmuch as that "genuine knowledge, fraught with peace" grows from "sweet counsels between head and heart" (353-4). Cf. xii. A 84-90, and preface to *The Borderers* mentioned in de S., 586, and now published in *Nineteenth Century*, November, 1926, pp. 723-41, and in *P. W.*, *Youth*, pp. 345-9.

✓ 230. *passions*: Cf. A 835 and "feelings" (226). Selfishness, vanity, pride, envy, and the like, though rationalized and concealed under high-sounding names and altruistic motives, colored and directed the reasoning process which was supposedly lifted above them.

232-5. Cf. xii. A 123-8.

234. *that*: That extreme. Throughout the account of his relations with the Revolution Wordsworth might well have stressed his immaturity, the confident, inexperienced idealism of youth.

235-44. (Despite the charity professed in 232, these ironical lines are quite as severe as 228-31. Wordsworth came to realize how little "self-knowledge and self-rule" he and his friends had possessed, how unable they had been to shake off human infirmities, how presumptuous was their disregard of past experience embodied in "general laws.") It may be that A 825-6 is changed into 240 because the passage as a whole is satirical and Wordsworth still regarded A 825-6 as true.

A 824. Omitted from the final text. Cf. 247-54 n.

✓ 241-4. (These lines seem to me not so much "an exact poetical version" of any particular passage in Godwin (de S., 587, Legouis trs., p. 260 n.) as the expression of an idea current

at the time. Each case is to be judged not by any general principles or laws but quite by itself, in the light of its circumstances, and each person in judging is to be independent not only of tradition but of the opinions of his contemporaries.

✓ 245-6. These lines are apparently not in A, B, or C. (Concerning A 831-2, which they replace, see 183-5 n.) They may mean either that Wordsworth's hope for Liberty—"hope" (245) and "proud" (246) may refer to the "disappointment" (212) and the "mortified presumption" (216) caused by Liberty's "doom"—was revived by the realization, which he has just expressed, that the freedom of the individual was not to be gained through governmental action but freedom of government through the development of individual liberty. Or they may mean that, when he came to revise this book, he mistakenly believed that the war of conquest had, in 1795, shaken his faith in the Revolution, or in the chances of its success.

247-54. "Far from being indifferent to my fellow men, I was too eager that they should develop rapidly their great possibilities." See xii. 57-60. Godwin declared:

In the estimate that is usually made of democracy, one of the sources of our erroneous judgment, lies in our taking mankind such as monarchy and aristocracy have made them, and thence judging how fit they are to manage for themselves. . . . Nothing can be more unreasonable, than to argue, from men as we now find them, to men as they may hereafter be made.<sup>11</sup>

248. Note the figure. "Thirst *for*" would have been clearer.

249. *secure intelligence*: Cf. 203-5, 224-8, 328-33, i. 409 n.  
✓ 249-50. *sick Of other longing*: A 835 has "passion" instead of "longing." Cf. 225-6. (Apparently Wordsworth means that, though as interested in human welfare as ever, he was weary of the emotional humanitarianism and of plans to ameliorate the condition of mankind which were based on love for men as they then were. It would be strange indeed if Wordsworth's idealization of men and his enthusiastic love of them had not been considerably chilled since he left France. It is unlikely that he is referring to his feelings for Annette since he

would hardly introduce without a warning a purely personal emotion into an account of a development that is otherwise typical. At the same time his feeling for her and his feeling about his treatment of her—whatever they may each have been—may have profoundly affected his general outlook on life, and thus his attitude towards matters with which she had no direct connection.)

251. *nature*: Human nature.

254. Even the rhythm of this stately, gracious line suggests the sixteenth century. The figure of the butterfly (251-3) seems to have recalled (or to have been prompted by) Spenser's poem on the butterfly, from which a good part of 253-4 is taken (see de Selincourt note).

256-8. Substituted for the involved and difficult A 841-9.

A 843. *the transition*: From man as he is to man as he is to be.

✓ A 844. *nature*: An excellent idea of Wordsworth's conception of "nature" in this sense of the normal and rational and at the same time of that which is in accord with the cosmic order or general scheme of things is given in xiii. 20-47, where external nature is praised as "the visible quality and shape And image of right reason," that is, of the higher "nature." Interestingly enough, immediately after this later passage there is a reference to "pure imagination" as a result of following "nature" just as, at the conclusion of the lines we are considering, a work of "false imagination" (A 848) is mentioned as resulting from the failure to follow "nature." Furthermore, three lines after he speaks of "pure imagination" (that is, in xiii. 53-4) he tells us, as further evidence of his recovery, that he was "studious more to see Great truths, than touch and handle little ones," just as here, in the account of his "disease," he "sacrificed . . . a comprehensive mind To . . . microscopic views."

A 845. *exactness*: An unfortunate word (which seems to mean "just perceptions") since one associates "exactness" with "microscopic views" rather than with "a comprehensive mind."

A 846. *microscopic views*: An unduly analytical and intellectual approach to the problem. In xii. 88-92 Wordsworth

uses the same phrase to describe the change in his attitude towards external nature, which took place about this time. Cf. also viii. 604-7; xiii. 48-54.

A 848. *false imagination*: See A 844 n. Since "microscopic views" could not furnish just perceptions and since the imagination itself was unhealthy—for the "heart . . . had been turned aside From Nature's way" (290-1)—the projects and the methods Wordsworth considered at this time were not in accord with reality and truth.

259-71. Here, as in x. 282-314; xi. 35-73, 176-88 (cf. also x. 331-6), Wordsworth blames his aberrations and those of other radicals on the blind and bitter hostility of the reactionaries and, as in 35-52, says their refusal to acknowledge that "a veil had been Uplifted" made him distrust everything they favored: not only institutions (doubtless including the church and possibly marriage) but the customs, laws, morality bound up with these institutions. That is, he became skeptical as to the entire social system, the received ordering of life. Unfortunately the reactionaries followed the same unwise course and for some years successfully opposed all liberal policies such as the reform of the electorate and the emancipation of slaves.

262. *their*: Institutions'.

268. "should be felt" is understood after "sorrow."

272-3. Wordsworth's mind was like an animal that has been not only freed from the restraints which kept it in order but also pricked on to run wild.

273-4. Presumably Wordsworth here refers to the effect on him of England's declaration of war (see x. 263-314; xi. 176-88). What was deepest in him was bound up with "patriotic love," and having lost this love he began to question all things. At sea and with his rudder gone, he was soon borne on the rocks by the gales of French perfidy and English bigotry.

A 866-73. A 866-70 and "slow" in A 872, both interesting bits of self-analysis, are omitted from the final text. Concerning Wordsworth's melancholy at this time (see de S. note), it may be recalled that, as he has himself told us, his "day-thoughts" were "most melancholy," his "nights . . . miserable" (x. 397-8), that he "scarcely had one night of quiet

sleep" (x. A 374), and that in his letter to Mathews of late December, 1794, he referred to his attendance on Calvert as "a most melancholy office." In view of his utter discouragement about public affairs, the loss of much of his faith in both God and man, his poverty, his uncertainty as to his future occupation and manner of life, the hostility of his family, the separation from all whom he loved, and his concern about Annette, it would be strange indeed if the two and a half years between England's declaration of war and his settling with Dorothy in Racedown were happy and his outlook on life sane and wholesome,—if, to use his own words, his "heart" were not "turned aside From Nature's way by outward accidents" (290-1).

A 869-70. Chiasmus; cf. ix. 117; xii. 13-14; xiii. 180.

276. *a happy man*: In the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth declares that a poet is, among other things, "a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him" (*Oxf. W.*, p. 937), and in his remarks on "Resolution and Independence" he refers to poets as "the happiest of all men" (*Oxf. W.*, p. 899). He wrote W. R. Hamilton, June 25, 1832, of "those genial feelings which, thro' life, have not been so much accompaniments of my character, as vital principles of my existence," and said to Barron Field, "No great poem has been written by a young man or by an unhappy one. It was poor dear Coleridge's constant infelicity that prevented him from being the poet that Nature had given him the power to be."<sup>12</sup>

278. *Free . . . of the world*: He had not "given hostages to Fortune"; he was not restrained from doing what he wished by consideration for dependents or by any position that he held.

A 879, 291 (A 887). *Nature's*: In A 879, a line which was early deleted, "Nature" is used in the sense of "human nature," "Nature's holiest places" meaning "the holiest things of life." There was nothing, however sacred, however (apparently) instinctive, however fundamental in morality (see 293-320 n.), that was not questioned. In 291 (on which see A 866-73 n.), "Nature" seems to be used much as in A 844 in the sense, expounded in xiii. 20-47, of the normal, the sane, the rational. To Professor Garrod, on the contrary, it means

"the visible beauty of the external world, or that disposition of the human mind and character by which we are farthest from the limitations of custom and nearest to the original goodness which, in accordance with the philosophy of Rousseau, is man's proper possession. . . . The two ideas here merge" (*Wordsworth*, p. 94).

283. *some dramatic tale*: This cannot be *The Borderers*, which Coleridge already knew, but may refer to *The Excursion*, in which, as the Preface informs us, "the intervention of characters speaking is employed, and something of a dramatic form adopted." That is, in *The Excursion* Wordsworth does not speak in his own person but through characters "endued with shapes Livelier" (that is, with distinct personalities), one of whom flings out as unguarded words as his nature prompts him to use!<sup>13</sup> The Solitary's state of mind on the loss of his family and of his faith in the French Revolution (*Excursion*, iii. 680-991) is similar to Wordsworth's as pictured in 287-320.

284-5. These lines, a late addition, show that Wordsworth was consciously reticent in *The Prelude*. See pp. 271-3, 276, 285. E has "more passionate words."

✓ 293-320. (The word "moral" (305) is the key to the understanding of this passage, since the problems which troubled Wordsworth were no longer those of politics or government or metaphysics but of morality. It was only *moral* questions, and social problems arising out of them, that he yielded up in despair.) We should not know this from 293-8, where the terms used are so general as to be applicable to any field, but 298-301 make it perfectly clear, since "impulse, motive, right and wrong, the ground Of obligation . . . whence The sanction" can refer only to ethical questions. Likewise A 895-6 says definitely "the ground Of moral obligation," and the Z variant of xii. A 48, which refers to this period, speaks of "perplexities In moral knowledge." (Lines 309-20 are even more obviously concerned with the field of conduct. "Of what use," Wordsworth asked, "is the freedom of the will, of which man boasts, since he has no certain criterion as to what is good and what evil to guide him in using his freedom, and since, even if he knew the right, he would lack the moral force to do it but would rebelliously act as selfish passion urged.")



It seems likely that soon after Wordsworth reached the conclusion that freedom was not to be obtained through political action and so turned his attention to building "social upon personal Liberty" (240), his interest in politics waned. Coleridge said that in 1795-7, "His conversation extended to almost all subjects, except physics and politics; with the latter he never troubled himself"! <sup>14</sup> Apparently institutions, customs, laws, and "the frame of social life" first drew his attention. Already skeptical of these because they were warmly supported by bigoted reactionaries, his skepticism grew and was later transferred to the moral code underlying them. Eventually he came to believe that there was no certainty in moral judgments and no moral force capable of compelling the individual to obey such moral judgments as he made. "This was the crisis of that strong disease," for with the moral basis gone the entire social fabric built upon it was reduced to mere custom and tottered to its fall. Hence Wordsworth yielded up moral questions, and social questions dependent on them, in despair and betook himself to that realm of abstract and changeless truth which is farthest from human frailty—to mathematics. This last move indicates that he did not question the validity of the reasoning powers themselves just as he apparently never questioned the reality of the external world or the faithfulness of the picture of it given us by the senses. His doubts were not metaphysical (see also 321-33 n.). Another picture of his state of mind at this time is given in the first seven lines of the fragment printed in de S., 512.

<sup>1</sup> An important implication of this passage is its anti-Godwinism.<sup>15</sup> No true follower of *Political Justice* would have troubled "to reach Authority's abiding place" (E variant of A 872-81) since Godwin had already found it in reason; nor would he have thought of "calling the mind, Suspiciously, to establish in plain day Her titles" (295-7) since Godwin's entire system rested on the mind (i. e. reason) as the sole and sufficient guide in all matters; nor would he have accepted the freedom of the will (309-11, 318-20) by questioning the obligation strong enough to enforce and by admitting the possibility that man may be "to acknowledged law rebellious," since a cardinal point in *Political Justice* is that man has no freedom

but must do what he feels will bring him the most happiness, and what accordingly he believes at the moment is the wisest thing to do.

294. The nouns are all different from those in A, "passions" being the most significant of those omitted from A's list.

306-33. Added in A<sup>2</sup>, although the gist of 328-33 is given in A 902-5. Lines 321-33 are admirably expressed.

309. *Where wanted most*: In the fields of moral judgments and of conduct.

321-33. Wordsworth was still what may be termed a rationalist; that is, he still sought, not learning, not judgment, wisdom, and the knowledge of men, but eternal and immutable truth (330-3, cf. 203-5, 224-7, 238-9),—such truth as could be gained by "the reasoning faculty," which was still "enthroned" (329, cf. 233-5). The field was changed but not the goal nor the means of reaching it. He had not yet arrived at the conviction, which he came to feel with all the intensity of his nature and to which the remaining books of *The Prelude* are largely devoted: that, unless supplemented and corrected by observation, experience, sympathy, the affections, and the imagination, reason is a dangerous guide. He still thought of it as a tool which yields the same infallible results in the hands of all who learn to use it, whereas in reality these results vary greatly with the personality of the reasoner, with his intentions, desires, prejudices, and other limitations, which in turn are profoundly affected by his environment and training.<sup>16</sup>

He had, to be sure, come to believe "our blessed reason [is] of least use Where wanted most" (308-9) but, though it was little help on fundamentals, he knew no better tool, and it enabled him to escape reality. (In such a crisis some men have turned (more wisely) to the study of plant or animal life or, like Stein in Conrad's *Lord Jim*, to collecting butterflies. It is characteristic of Wordsworth that he did none of these, that he did not use his hands or submit to patient, scientific observation. He craved objects that endure, not the changing variety of living things, preferred the abstract to the concrete, man to men, static perfection to vital, evolving imperfection. He was interested in pure truth and therefore never cared for history (see viii. 617-25 n.), which is a record of man's inadequate but

growing realization of the truth. Concerning his admiration for mathematics see vi. 115-67 n., 137-8 n.; 330 is changed but slightly from v. 105b.

A 905-8. The de S. note explains why these lines should have come after A 921 or A 941 not why they should have been removed. It may be that, finding it difficult to fit them into any other place, Wordsworth concluded that he had said enough about Coleridge; but one has an uneasy fear that their quarrel may have blinded him to this spiritual indebtedness, which is not acknowledged elsewhere in *The Prelude*. See also xiv. 277 n. and the de S. note to xiv. A 247-69.

331-4. The facsimile in de S. facing p. 588 shows that Wordsworth apparently added 331-2 after completing the passage and that he first wrote "thy bounty" instead of "the bounteous."

333-70. One sentence 37 lines long; cf. v. 197-222 n.

333-48. Cf. xiv. 232-66, 277 n.; *Recluse*, I. i. 85-97; "The Sparrow's Nest," 15-20. As might be surmised from its religious tone, 334 is a late addition.

337-40. An excellent figure. In comparison with their present intimacy, Dorothy's previous relations with her brother suggested a brook that merely crossed a road contrasted with one that is "seen, heard, felt, and caught at every turn."

337. As this was the first time Wordsworth had been with his sister since Reason's naked self had become the object of his fervor, her wholesome, non-intellectual point-of-view, her delight in the concrete may have seemed so fresh, so different from his own course of thought, as to be called a "sudden admonition."

344. Despite the de S. note, the "and" of the final text may not be an error but a correction. Perhaps it occurred to Wordsworth that the brightness of a waning no less than of a clouded moon was sure to return and accordingly he may have changed "not" to "and" and have added 345 to make the point clear.

346-8. The development of Wordsworth's consciousness that poetry was his "office upon earth" is by no means clear. In the Fenwick note to *An Evening Walk* he refers to a "moment . . . important in my poetical history; for I date from it my

consciousness of the infinite variety of natural appearances which had been unnoticed by the poets . . . and I made a resolution to supply in some degree the deficiency. I could not have been at that time above fourteen years of age." Wordsworth's earliest extant lines, "And has the Sun his flaming chariot driven," were written as a school exercise at this time (1784-5); *The Vale of Esthwaite* and two or three short pieces were composed in 1787, when *An Evening Walk* was begun; while *Prelude*, iv. 100-30 makes clear that the summer of 1788 was marked for him by "the fermentation, and the vernal heat Of poesy." Yet according to *The Prelude* (vi. 52-6) it was in his second or third year at Cambridge that he trusted "with firmness, hitherto but lightly touched By such a daring thought" that he might write poetry that would live. In February, 1793, soon after his return from France, he published *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*; and in August or September of that year while wandering on Salisbury Plain, he gained deeper conviction of his mission and fresh insight into its nature (xiii. 279-378). Yet in the two years between this event and his settling at Racedown (in September, 1795, the period here referred to), although he thought of himself as a poet in August, 1794 (x. 544-52), he apparently wrote almost no poetry except the remainder of *Guilt and Sorrow*. At Racedown he composed *The Borderers* and commenced "The Ruined Cottage"; but it was not until the combined influence of Dorothy, Coleridge, and nature had been at work for two years and he was over twenty-seven that his poetry began to flow in a steady stream and the writing of it became his chief occupation.)

349. *as hereafter will be shown*: In the two following books but not, as the A<sup>2</sup>C variant of A 922 implies, in the final one. XII deals primarily with nature, XIII with man ("human love"). "As . . . fail not" is not in A and, though better than the wordy A<sup>2</sup>C variant of A 922, is prosaic and hardly necessary.

350-4. Herbert Read remarks:

Wordsworth did not become conscious of the intimate link that existed between his character and his surroundings until that link was broken by his departure for Cambridge in 1787. Even then the full realisation of the significance of his early mode of life did not come to

him. . . . The realisation did not come, in my opinion, until some time after his second visit to France. It came as an aftermath, as an issue from the emotional storm that descended upon him in France.<sup>17</sup>

A 923-9. A 925, A 927, and much of A 923 are omitted from the final text; A 924, A 926, and A 928-9 are considerably changed. The omission of A 927b may be significant.

353-4. These beautiful and characteristic lines were developed as late as 1832 or 1839 from the tame A 926. Cf. *The Excursion*, iv. 1152-5:

The estate of man would be indeed forlorn  
If false conclusions of the reasoning power  
Made the eye blind, and closed the passages  
Through which the ear converses with the heart.

✓357-8. *catastrophe*: Utter ruin. "They," the opponents of the Revolution, felt that its work had been nullified. Wordsworth, on the contrary, continued to believe that, despite mistakes, "a veil had been Uplifted" and that "sorrow" should be felt

for the man  
Who either had not eyes wherewith to see,  
Or, seeing, had forgotten! (xi. 266-70)

361. *opprobrium*: In opposition to "catastrophe" (357).

✓364. *vomit*: The return of the French to their former subjection to the church and the monarchy. This vigorous but repulsive figure (taken from 2 *Peter*, ii. 22) was extended in 1832 by prefixing 362 and most of 363, which also refer to eating. Wordsworth either did not yet fully believe that social freedom's "only basis [is] The freedom of the individual mind" (A 825-6) or he failed to realize how little of what he termed "freedom of mind" there was among the French, most of whom had always preferred the religion and the government to which they returned.

✓370. Wordsworth now turns, though with a backward glance in 379-87, to Coleridge and to Sicily, where Coleridge was then staying. The poetry is thereby improved; note especially A 950 (377-9), A 961, 394-5, 408-12, 418-23, 453-9a.

372-4. An improvement over A 943-5 particularly in the elimination of "beneath The breath" with its ineffectual figure

and unpleasant similarity of sounds (see 388 n. and iii. 28 n.). "Its hopes . . . love" (A 945-6), though good in itself, may have seemed irrelevant.

A 948-9, A 962-6, A 974-5. My colleague, Kent Roberts Greenfield, tells me that the opinion of Italy here expressed was common in French and English literary circles throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. The omission of "basest and the lowest . . . Of all the race of men" (A 948-9) and of A 974-5, and the substitution of 389-91 for A 962-6 were probably due to Wordsworth's visit to Italy in 1837, when, though depressed by Italy's abject state under Austrian and Papal rule, he wrote: "They—fallen Italy—Nor must, nor will, nor can, despair of Thee!" and "The hour When thou, uprisen, shalt break thy double yoke."<sup>18</sup> Yet 389-91 re-affirm the pessimism of the A text. The noble sonnet, "On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic," was composed in August, 1802, two years before XI was written.

377-8. Presumably changed from the more compact and effective A 950 because of the distance of Etna from Syracuse and perhaps also because of the awkward sound of "looketh."

379. *Righteous Heaven*: Has a sanctimonious air from which the more vigorous "Living God" (A 951) is free.

380. A variation of "How are the mighty fallen" (2 *Samuel*, i. 25).

382-3. Like ix. 364-8, 408-17; x. 191-208 (cf. also i. 186-205 and de S. n.; xi. 432-49), another illustration of how deeply—and as it seems to me unfortunately, since it blinded him to realities—Wordsworth's attitude towards the Revolution, like that of his friends the Girondists, was influenced by stories of Greek and Roman heroes.

384-5. Cf. the bigoted, unworthy lines about the "perpetual emptiness" of the French in "Great men have been among us," 9-14.

384. *ill-requited*: By the allies, and perhaps by fate, for her efforts in behalf of human progress.

388. *see of sorrow*: Unpleasant alliteration, especially in view of the preceding s's. See 372-4 n. and iii. 28 n.

A 964. *memorial hope*: This means much the same thing as 389-90 or the D variant of A 961-6: there is no hope for the

Italians since they are not spurred to glorious deeds by the memory of their past greatness.

391. Inferior to A 961.

392. *hope*: Referring to "hope" in 390. Apparently Coleridge is to be "refreshed" by indignation.

394-5. Cf. Coleridge's poem to Wordsworth, after his recitation of *The Prelude*,

The truly great  
Have all one age, and from one visible space  
Shed influence! They, both in power and act,  
Are permanent, and Time is not with them. (50-3)

394. *society*: "A collection of individuals composing a community or living under the same organization or government" (NED, which quotes this passage as an illustration). Wordsworth may imply a contrast to fashionable society and to associations and organized groups which are often termed "Societies."

A 971-7. Omitted in 1832 or 1839, probably because the passage adds little and is not in itself distinguished and because A 947-77 seemed repetitious and unduly long. "Time" (A 971), the monuments and memories of Sicily's past greatness; "store" (A 972), abundance.

396. *such converse*: Referring to "society" (394). Similarly "those motions" (the corresponding expression in A 978) refers to "mov'st" (A 976); Wordsworth was perhaps thinking of the vigorous walker Coleridge had formerly been.

400-1. Cf. "Two Voices are there," 10-14; "One might believe," 13-14; and "England! the time is come," 14.

409-15. As Coleridge went to Sicily by boat he was not near the Alps; yet they are no longer the "image of pure gladness" to Wordsworth because Coleridge is passing through ("to" in A 996) *kindred* scenes in poor health and spirits.

419. *flowery field*: Repeated in 446.

424-70. This passage recalls viii. 173-85 in its classic subject matter and style.

424-6. Because Sicily, like the English lake district, is a land of mountains and shepherds.

454-65. Not in A. The version in A<sup>2</sup>C, which in several

places is better in others more wordy and ornate than that finally adopted, arranges the concluding lines in a different sequence.

458 *In wood or echoing cave*: Cf. *Paradise Lost*, iv. 681, "Of echoing hill or thicket."

459. Wordsworth's own punctuation, which appears in the A<sup>2</sup>C variant of this passage, is clearer. The sense is, "or [worthy of poets who attuned their harps] in reverence . . ." "In wood" corresponds to "'Mid temples," "heroes" to "gods." Unfortunately Coleridge's life in Sicily was very unlike what Wordsworth imagined it would be.

468. *gratulatest*: Perhaps influenced by Milton's frequent use of similar verb-forms, which most persons find unpleasant: "interposest," "supposest," "surpassest," "enterprisest," "slepst," "utterdst," "interpret'st," "feigndst," "stripdst."<sup>19</sup>



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> A. O. Lovejoy, "Some Meanings of 'Nature,'" in *Primitivism in Antiquity*, Baltimore, 1935, p. 449.

<sup>2</sup> E. Cobham Brewer, *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, 25 edition, New York, n. d., p. 814. For this reference I am indebted to Miss Frieda C. Thies of the Johns Hopkins University Library.

<sup>3</sup> Waller and Glover ed., I, 119-20, II, 155. Southey wrote in 1824. "Few persons but those who have lived in it can conceive or comprehend what the memory of the French Revolution was, nor what a visionary world seemed to open upon those who were just entering it. Old things seemed passing away, and nothing was dreamt of but the regeneration of the human race" (*Correspondence of Robert Southey with Caroline Bowles*, Dublin, 1881, p. 52).

<sup>4</sup> I quote from the earlier and briefer A 685-9; the idea is unchanged in the 1850 text. See also 139-41 n.

<sup>5</sup> See Frédéric Lachèvre, *Les Successeurs de Cyrano de Bergerac*, Paris, 1922; Lewis Mumford, *The Story of Utopias*, New York, 1922; J. O. Hertzler, *The History of Utopian Thought*, New York, 1923; F. T. Russell, *Touring Utopia*, New York, 1932.

<sup>6</sup> See also *La vie, les aventures, & le voyage de Groenland* du Pere Cordelier Pierre de Mesange, 2 vols., Amsterdam, 1720. I owe my knowledge of these works to my former colleague, Gilbert Chinard.

<sup>7</sup> See E. C. Batho, *The Later Wordsworth*, Cambridge, 1933, pp. 70-1.

<sup>8</sup> Letter to James Losh of December 4, 1821; *Convention of Cintra* (Grosart, I, 39). The letter to Losh makes clear that in the *Convention of Cintra* passage Wordsworth is speaking of his own development. Professor de Selincourt thinks he is not, but this does not affect the argument presented in de S., 585-6 since lines 206-22 do not mean, as p. 585 implies, "Wordsworth's renunciation of France." It should be observed that in the letter to Losh he ascribes most of the blame not to France but to Napoleon.

<sup>9</sup> *Political Justice*, 3 ed., 1798, I, 273-4.

<sup>10</sup> On March 21, 1796, he wrote Mathews: "I expect to find the work [*Political Justice*, 2 ed.] much improved. I cannot say that I have been encouraged in this hope by the perusal of the second preface, which is all I have yet looked into. Such a piece of barbarous writing I have not often seen." When Legouis declared that in London Wordsworth "breathed a Godwinian atmosphere" (trs., p. 264) he confused Jacobinism with Godwinism. There is no evidence that Wordsworth's publisher, Johnson, accepted or that Joseph Fawcett preached those features of *Political Justice* which distinguished it from the radical doctrines current at the time. According to Coleridge's letter to Poole of January 15, 1804 (*Coleridge's Letters*, ed. E. H. Coleridge, Boston, 1895, II, 454) Wordsworth at one time "was, even to extravagance, a Necessitarian," and this belief, though he might have found it in Hartley and in many other writers, he may well have taken from Godwin.

<sup>11</sup> *Political Justice*, 3 ed., 1798, II, 119-20.

<sup>12</sup> See the entire passage as given in de Selincourt's English Association pamphlet, *The Early Wordsworth*, 1936, p. 28; also vi. 171-8 n., xiv. 293-6 n., and Legouis' excellent chapter on Wordsworth in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*.

<sup>13</sup> For this suggestion I am indebted to A. L. Craver of Miami University.

<sup>14</sup> *Biographia Literaria*, chapter x (ed. Shawcross, I, 122).

<sup>15</sup> So far as I know this has not previously been pointed out; it was called to my attention by my former student, Dr E N Hooker.

<sup>16</sup> "The rationality of thought does not lie in the thought itself, as a quality of it, but depends upon its reference to the external world as known in immediate experience. . . . At every point it is liable to be in contradiction with the practical activity and, therefore, with the emotional life which is the source of practical activity, of the individual whose thought it is. Such thinking may, indeed, be true, but there is no real reason to expect that it will be true, or that the arguments used to support it, however cogent they may appear, are worth consideration. Thought divorced from life is inherently unreal and untrustworthy.

All thought is psychologically conditioned . . . that . . . is socially conditioned, since human nature is essentially social. Thought, therefore, is never the activity of an artificially isolated individual. The individual thinker is necessarily the member of a particular community at a particular point in the development of history. His thinking is historically conditioned because it is socially conditioned. . . . He cannot lift himself out of his place in the historic process of human society and become a pure consciousness. He cannot, by any miracle of levitation, suspend himself in vacuity outside the process of world-history and look down upon it from outside" (John Macmurray, *Interpreting the Universe*, 1933, pp. 131, 157-8, 155). "What was thought to be pure knowledge, we see now to have been shot through with hope and desire with fear and wonder, and these intrusive elements indeed gave it all its power to support our lives" (I. A. Richards, *Science and Poetry*, New York, 1926, p. 78, cf. p. 62).

<sup>17</sup> Herbert Read, *Wordsworth*, New York, 1931, pp. 59-60.

<sup>18</sup> "They—who have seen," 13-14; "From the Alban Hills," 11-12. See, also written in 1837, "Fair Land!" ("awake, Mother of Heroes, from thy death-like sleep") and the sonnet which follows, "As indignation," in which he retracts his harsh criticism and expresses his love of Italy.

<sup>19</sup> *Paradise Lost*, ii. 738; viii. 86, 359; x. 270; xi. 369, 762; *Samson Agonistes*, 790, 1135, 1188. Milton also has "exquisitest" (*Paradise Regained*, ii. 346), "virtousest, discreetest" (*Paradise Lost*, viii. 550). I am indebted to William R. Parker of Ohio State University for the examples cited.

## BOOK XII (A XI)

THIS, the shortest book of *The Prelude*, is devoted chiefly to Wordsworth's attitude towards nature at the time when "Reason's naked self [was] The object of . . . [his] fervour." It also reviews briefly his general state of mind during this period and concludes with two incidents of his boyhood the memory of which assisted his recovery. The first 151 lines deal with 1795, the year of Calvert's death, of Wordsworth's return to London, of his settling with Dorothy at Racedown, of his coming to know Coleridge. He was twenty-five at the time. Lines corresponding to 208-61, 287-332 were probably written about 1799-1800; the originals of 131-39, 93-109, 261-87, and 151-207 (in the order given) apparently in February or March, 1804; these scattered passages seem to have been brought together and revised, and the remaining 180 lines of the A text composed in the last week of April, 1805.<sup>1</sup>

The title does not occur in Z, A, or C; B, D, and E have only "Imagination, how impaired and restored"; E<sup>2</sup> (written in 1839) adds, after "Imagination," "and Taste." Imagination is the subject of XII, XIII, and the first 231 lines of XIV, since only the last 223 lines of the final book are properly designated "Conclusion." In XII Wordsworth says nothing directly about his imagination but apparently expects us to infer that when he fell under the domination of reason, which (as he points out in A 121-37) emphasized logic, minute analysis, and criticism, his imagination (which is synthetic, creative, and allied with feeling) was "impaired." For the sake of clarity he treats the imagination as it relates to nature separately from the imagination as it relates to man. The former he takes up in this book; the latter, in XIII. There is this difference, however, that in the present book he describes how

the visible Universe  
Fell under the dominion of a taste  
Less spiritual, with microscopic view  
Was scanned, as I had scanned the moral world;  
(89-92)

that is, he describes by implication how the imagination was impaired but he merely affirms his recovery; and, although he suggests the means, does not enumerate the steps by which his imagination was restored. In XIII, on the contrary, the impairing of the imagination in respect to man having been already traced in x, xi, and xii. 49-87, he tells in detail how he came to find

Once more in Man an object of delight,  
Of pure imagination, and of love. (xiii. 49-50)

In the passage quoted just above (89-92), mention is made of "taste," with which, according to the title, this book also deals. The words occur again some sixty lines later when, in speaking of the maid who in her devotion to nature had followed the better way, Wordsworth says,

Far less did rules prescribed by passive taste,  
Or barren intermeddling subtleties,  
Perplex her mind. (154-6)

Apparently by taste Wordsworth means a faculty which is passive, analytical, and concerned with "critic rules" (note A 203), the obverse of the active, creative, synthetic, intuitive imagination. Hence, as taste grew, imagination was impaired; and as the imagination was restored taste was impaired.<sup>2</sup>

The last 130 lines of the book, which tell of certain memorable "spots of time," do not appear at first sight to have a great deal to do with either nature or the imagination. In their original form they antedate by at least four years the composition of the book as a whole and contain little philosophic interpretation. In later years the incidents they describe came to be fraught with many meanings, none of them too clearly apprehended or distinguished, and their relation to the rest of XII became obscured. What this relation was intended to be may, however, be deduced from 201-4, taken in connection with the V variant of A 264, and the W variant of A 338-45: these "spots of time" are examples of simple incidents so transformed by the imagination that when Wordsworth returned to them his mind, "especially the imaginative power," was "nourished and invisibly repaired." The recollection of these instances of the potency of his imagination in former days

revived his imagination and gave him perhaps for the first time a realization of its power. Such incidents were connected with nature and presumably his turning to them was in part due to his new life in the country and to the revival, under Dorothy's influence, of his earlier unquestioning acceptance of nature (151-207).

All this should have been made much clearer. It is no wonder that he wrote in manuscript Z: "This whole book [i. e. XII and XIII] wants retouching, the subject is not sufficiently brought out" (de S., xxiv-xxv). But he could not force himself to the necessary radical revision—a task which creative writers are generally loath to undertake and in which they are not often successful—or even to the elimination of minor difficulties with which XII bristles. When he composed it his creative powers were apparently numbed by the death of his brother; he had already completed the part of the poem in which he was most interested; and he had been deprived for over a year of the encouragement and advice of Coleridge, to whom the undertaking of a long poem was largely due. It was chiefly for these reasons that he failed to put forth the effort necessary to the accomplishment of the difficult task that lay ahead of him but was content to bring together various passages already written without adding a great deal to them and without thinking his ideas through or endeavoring to make them clear to his readers. But although XII and XIII contain less real poetry than any other part of *The Prelude*, Pater rightly referred to them as "those two lofty books."<sup>8</sup>

1-23. Except for the moralizing in 12-15 and the obviousness and prettiness of "waves . . . kiss the pebbly shore" (21-2), this passage is better in the final than in the earlier versions. "Ignorance" (1) is substituted for "unhappiness" because the latter is implied in the following line; the awkward "with what dismal sights beset For the outward view" (A 2-3) is eliminated; "judgment" (5) takes the place of the less clear "opinion" and "haunt the sides Of the green hills" (9-10) of the commonplace "through the fields Stir gently"; and the unpleasant alliteration "breezes . . . breathe The breath" (A 10-11; see iii. 28 n.) disappears. Of the added lines (11-18, 21-3), 16-18, 21, 23 are admirable. The excellent

passage from Y (de S., 422) is so unlike A 9-13 and occurs in such a different connection that it is to be regarded as a parallel, not as a variant. If Wordsworth had recalled it he might have substituted it for 9-19. The phrase, "motions of delight" (9), occurs in viii. A 80 with the meaning "emotions," which it may possibly have here, although the following line suggests that physical motion is referred to.

9-34. An attractive passage in Wordsworth's later, less spontaneous style.

9-20, D variant. *spirits of air*: There is no real animism here; see p. 70 above and 93-104 n.

13-14. Chiasmus. Cf. ix. 117, xi. A 869-70.

15. As normally read this line would be an Alexandrine but "influence" may be tortured into a dissyllable and "power" into a monosyllable.

33-43. A 24-6 are replaced by 33; A 28, which probably seemed too prosaic, by 35-7, but 36 is poor and 37 execrable; A 35-41 are dropped, presumably as obvious or as repetitive of what has already been said.

38. *complacency*: Quiet pleasure; cf. viii. A 75 n. In Z, "stillness beauty or repose."

45-9. Substituted for A 43-5, which makes clear that *The Prelude* records the *growth* of "intellectual power." From A we likewise learn that the comma after "power" is a mistake of the editor's and that the meaning is "power which fosters love, dispenses truth, and diffuses sympathies over men and things."

✓ 45. *intellectual power*: See ii. 315 n. It is akin to *die Vernunft* and in 47 is contrasted with practical reason, *der Verstand*. In xiv. 188 "spiritual" is substituted for "intellectual" of xiv. A 166; yet a few lines later "intellectual" reappears and in the same connection as "spiritual" had been used (xiv. 207) in the preceding paragraph. The final text of the present passage has "dispensing truth" in place of "imagination teaching truth" (A 45). The change was probably made because, while the imagination is indispensable for the acquisition of any but the more obvious, utilitarian truths (it is constantly used by the scientist), it is not itself the organ of truth, as the A text might be thought to imply. See p. 232

above, where A 45 is discussed. The close relation between "intellectual power" and the imagination is shown by the fact that in xiv. 193-205 Wordsworth says that *The Prelude* traces the development of his imagination, just as he here declares that it chiefly tells of the growth of his intellectual power.

48. *Prophetic sympathies*: Sympathetic hopes which were later to be justified. Reason asks proof and takes no risks.

A 48. On the important variant in Z see xi. 183-5 n. and xi. 293-320 n.

52-6. This difficult passage is somewhat clearer in A 48-56, where the figure is admirably developed. The meaning is the same as in 76-80: the "sweet remembrances" of "blessed sentiment and fearless love" (A 52-3) refer to the life of the affections, the normal human relationships, from the spontaneous wisdom of which Wordsworth had cut himself off in his bigoted worship of reason. It seemed perfidious to dwell in such bowers of bliss (see Coleridge's letter to Wordsworth, quoted in de S., p. 515) instead of forwarding the time when men would be governed by reason and no longer by emotion and when human relationships, such as "ever and anon" were wistfully recalled, would no longer exist (57-60). The "fragrant notice of a pleasant shore" which he spurned cannot refer to nature since in her he still gloried (40-1) and since this paragraph seems to be set off sharply from the preceding one. "That," as is clear from A 50-1, is a demonstrative pronoun; "notice" is the subject of "availed"; "wafted" is a participle depending on "notice."

54-5. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, iv. 161-5:

off at sea north-east winds blow  
Sabaeon odours from the spicy shore  
Of Araby the Blest: with such delay  
Well pleased they slack their course, and many a league  
Cheered with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles.

58-60. Cf. xi. 247-54 and n.

61. "A very unusual rhythm for Wordsworth"—Nowell Smith. *Trust the elevation*: Wordsworth could no longer trust the elevated moods, such as those described in ii. 302-22; iv. 323-38; xiii. 279-378, in which he had felt kinship with the

world's leaders and had been inspired to hope that he might become one of them. For when he tested these leaders by reason and compared them with "the man to come" they seemed very imperfect models.

67-74. Poetry like everything else was subjected to the test of reason (67, 70, A 83, A 86, A 121-37) and failed, because the poets describe with sympathy and often with admiration the imperfect men whom we see about us. Wordsworth seems at this time to have felt that poetry should follow Shelley's plan of picturing "beautiful idealisms of moral excellence."<sup>4</sup>

70. "The perfection of the human character consists in approaching as nearly as possible to the perfectly voluntary state" [that in which we are completely controlled by reason].<sup>5</sup>

A 73. *sympathies of truth*: Sympathies with truth? valid sympathies? The reading in Z, "affinities of truth," suggests the specious. The meaning seems to be that poets mislead us by fastening man as he is upon our affections through pictures and comments which are true enough but which distract our attention from man as he is to be. Cf. A 48b-56.

75-6. Wordsworth's tendency to retrace ground already covered is referred to in ix. 1-17 and in the fifth line of the W variant of xiv. A 66-89; and is shown here and throughout VIII, in xi. 75-188, in his returning twice to the subject of mathematics (see vi. 115-67 n.) and many times to the ministry of books (iii. A 524-30 n.). His architectonic sense was not strong and he shrank from radical revision; hence, when he found he had more to say about a subject he was content to give a fresh account of it instead of incorporating the new material with the old.

77-87. Excellent figures, the second of which is carried further in A 83.

85-7. See pp. 2-7, 141-6 above. Until 1832 or 1839 the text read "mysteries of passion"; this probably seemed too narrow: not only passion but men's needs, associations, and intellectual interests mysteriously unite them to one another. A 86-7 was omitted about 1828. (The emotions are a unifying power since we all share in them and they mean a great deal to us, since we sympathize with many of the emotions of others which we do not share, and since they are principally



concerned with other human beings; the heart is universal, whereas the reason and analysis set forth "extrinsic differences" which part man from man (xiii. 206-20). On passion see Chapter II; on "the unity of all," see ii. 221 n. In his rationalistic period Wordsworth could easily dispose, by logic, of those universal but often illogical feelings, prejudices, intuitions, sympathies which unite mankind.

A 89-137. Except for A 115-18a these lines, which were not originally in Z (the earliest complete manuscript of this book), are unfortunately omitted from the final text. Doubtless A 90-5 and the illuminating but tangential A 121-37 seemed distracting. It is to be regretted that, along with much of 52-87, they were not kept but transferred to XI. Lines A 90-5, A 96-105 may have been rejected because they repeat some things already said in A 60-73, A 29-41; A 105-20, which are diffuse and involved, were effectively condensed into 88-91, in part by the unfortunate omission of A 111-14.

A 90-1. On Wordsworth's indifference to history, see viii. 617-25 n. At this time he was interested only in the man to come, who would be governed solely by reason. History, which seemed only a record of man's errors, might have furnished a valuable corrective to his doctrinaire complacency by showing how abstract principles must be modified in practice by considerations of the climate, geography, economic conditions, temper, and previous history of a people. Like the writers whom he admired, he had no conception of the continuity of history.

A 92. "The true difference is that one relates what has happened, the other what may happen. Poetry, therefore, is a more philosophical and a higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular."<sup>6</sup>

✓ A 97-8. It is not clear whether Wordsworth means the nature of the universe, that is, the immutable and beneficent laws of being and of thought, or whether "the laws . . . power" is in apposition with and means the same thing as "the life of nature" (A 99)—"These" (A 101) suggests that the two are different. Nor, if we accept this latter interpretation, can we be sure of what is meant by "nature" although A 102-15 suggest that this entire passage has reference to external nature:

"In this eclipse I still enjoyed the ministry of external nature and with this alone I was rich; yet my attitude towards nature suffered from the taint of my devotion to analytical reason."

A 99-100. *the God of love . . . pure*: This clause sounds like a late, orthodox addition, which it is not; it probably means no more than "the one interior life That lives in all things" (de S., 512).

A 102-5. Wordsworth had not merely the memory of his former delight in nature but still found joy in her. "Sounds" continues the "echo" figure.

A 107. The period after "die" should be a comma, the thought being "Yet . . . 'Tis true. . . ."

A 110. *its*: Sunshine's. Earth is referred to as "her" (A 108).

A 111-14. It might seem that natural objects would always appear the same, unaffected by the infirmities of the beholder.

91. *microscopic view*: Cf. vii. 740b-56a, xi. A 846 n., and contrast xiii. 48-54, where also the imagination is mentioned. At the time here described, when Wordsworth "fell under the dominion of . . . taste," his imagination was impaired (see pp. 560-1 above).

A 119. *its*: The visible universe's (A 115).

A 123-8. *Reason*: See iv. A 296 n.; with A 125 cf. A 86-7; with A 126 cf. ii. 203-32 n.; with A 127-8 cf. xi. 232-5.

A 134-7. Analytical reason destroys error but does not reveal those deeper truths which are known only to him who feels. See Chapters II and VII. Here too, *die Vernunft* is contrasted with *der Verstand*. Feeling is again emphasized in 100-1.

✓ 93-104. An attractive passage, which illustrates how easily the personification implied in the common reference to nature as "she" or "her" may pass into animism. Wordsworth first thinks of Nature almost as a playmate but his thought quickly changes and he speaks of the different natural forces as "Powers"—another form of animism; then he returns to his first conception, or to something like it, and sees Nature overflowing "with passion and with life." The very human feeling that Nature shares our emotions, the most wide-spread form of animism persisting among civilized people today, is expressed

not only in 94 but also in i. 3; viii. 63-4; xiii. 136; in "Lines written in Early Spring," 11-12, 19-20 (" 'tis my faith that every flower Enjoys the air it breathes"); and in the Immortality Ode, 191-2 ("Ye Fountains . . . Forebode not any severing of our loves"). The addition, in 1832 or 1839, of "by laws . . . still" (102-3), which suggests that the "Soul of Nature" may be the *anima mundi*, and the change of "With passion and with life" (A 147) to "With an impassioned life" are an unfortunate attempt to conceal what Wordsworth really felt and to reduce the passage to orthodox propriety by removing the animism. But as 93-4 remain unchanged and as the allusion to "Powers" in 98-9 was added, the result is inconsistency and confusion. It should be observed that 93-109 (A 138-52), which follow 131-9 (A 176-85) in W (de S., xxiii), were apparently composed over a year before the preceding A 75-137, which are not in W or in Z<sup>1</sup>. With A 146-7 cf. xiii. 290-1 and pp. 74, 86, 192 above; with "passion" (A 147) cf. A 84 and Chapter II; with 100-1, "the heart," cf. A 137 and likewise pp. 140, 152, 477-8 above.

106-9. "Physical pain and the loss of those we love, or their suffering, would excuse the errors and stupidity into which I fell, but I had no such justification. My misfortunes arose from pride of intellect."

109-31. Here Wordsworth explains how his less spiritual and more microscopic attitude to nature showed itself. Its chief defects were an analytical, critical state of mind, restlessness, pride, and indifference to deeper meanings. He may have been thinking of this attitude when, a year or two after he had shaken it off (204), he praised "a wise passiveness" and exclaimed:

Enough of Science and of Art;  
Close up those barren leaves;  
Come forth, and bring with you a heart  
That watches and receives.

("The Tables Turned," 29-32)

Compare also his condemnation of the naturalist as

One that would peep and botanize  
Upon his mother's grave.

("A Poet's Epitaph," 19-20)

Lines 151-92 picture, by way of contrast, the attitude of his wife, or sister, the one which he also had formerly held.

✓ 109. *presumption*: Compare "proud" (146) and contrast "humility" (187, A 210); cf. also "Nay, Traveller! rest," 50-64, "To the Daisy" ("In youth," 49-56). At this time Wordsworth's attitude was no longer one of grateful receptivity to whatever nature offered but that of the confident connoisseur or esthete who compares scene with scene and passes judgment. Accordingly the deeper ministry of nature escaped him.)

111-22. Wordsworth is here referring to the vogue of the picturesque, which was indeed "a strong infection of the age." The movement owed much to the Reverend William Gilpin's widely circulated accounts of his tours through various parts of the British Isles, which were published with delightful sepia illustrations between 1782 and 1809 as "Observations relative to Picturesque Beauty."<sup>7</sup> It culminated in Uvedale Price's *The Picturesque* (1794), which reached a third edition in 1810. Wordsworth referred to Gilpin in a note to *An Evening Walk*;<sup>8</sup> in his early years he owned two of Gilpin's works and in writing about his books to Mathews (March 21, 1796) these are the only ones he mentions in particular. He referred to them again in a letter to Joseph Cottle of August 28, 1798: "They are expensive books, and I should like to dispose of them." Five years before this he was already on his guard against the picturesque point of view, for one of the notes in *Descriptive Sketches* (1793, line 347) grandiloquently declares:

I had once given to these sketches the title of Picturesque; but the Alps are insulted in applying to them that term. Whoever, in attempting to describe their sublime features, should confine himself to the cold rules of painting would give his reader but a very imperfect idea of those emotions which they have the irresistible power of communicating to the most impassive imaginations.

(Here, as in lines 117-22, 144-5, 154-6, and 185-9 of the present book (which raise further objections), he criticizes the devotees of the picturesque for their analytical, critical attitude, their superficiality, their preoccupation with esthetics to the neglect of the moral and spiritual ministry of nature, their

judging nature in accordance with preconceptions derived from painting, and their slighting its appeal to the emotions and the imagination. Yet in the same note and in the next sentence but one he employs the terminology of the movement: "Had I wished to make a picture of this scene I had thrown much less light into it." Dorothy wrote to Mrs. Clarkson, August 10, 1812, that C. T. Bloomfield's "views of everything he sees are contracted by his love of the picturesque—his amiable disposition and his sensibility will I have little doubt in time overcome this—and after a few visits to the North he will find that there is a wider range of enjoyment here than he at present conceives."

111-12. Inconsistent with v. 595-605 (see note), which presents a less instinctive, a more profound, and presumably a later conception.

118-19. *moods Of time and season*: Wordsworth held attention to these to be of prime importance in landscape painting, "declaring he would not give a rush for any landscape that did not express the time of day, the climate, the period of the world it was meant to illustrate."<sup>9</sup>

123-31. It is almost inevitable that the proper relationship between the two elements of which man is composed should occasionally be disturbed, that the body instead of being controlled by the mind should at times control it. Cf. 220-23 and n. and vi. 736-8. A 169, A 171-2 are not in the final text. (The eye could hardly have gained dominion so early as 1793 (de S., A 171-99 n.) since such control was the result of a general mental state into which bigoted idolatry of reason had plunged Wordsworth. This was in 1795 (de S., 586). The phrase "a sudden return to Nature" (de S., 592; cf. Garrod, p. 81) is likely to mislead us for Wordsworth was not one who changed suddenly on important matters. Presumably his absorption in politics pushed nature for a time into the background, and undoubtedly the country occupied more of his attention and gave him more joy during his tramp to Wales than it had in Paris and London; but such facts do not imply any fundamental change. Furthermore, he does not say in "Tintern Abbey" that he "come[s] to Nature fleeing from something that he dreads, i. e. in reaction from his moral suf-

ferings" (de S., 592) but that he "bounded o'er the mountains . . . more *like* a man,"

Flying from something that he dreads than one  
Who sought the thing he loved. (68-72)

That is, he rushed about with restless turbulence, not only with the eager enthusiasm of youth but with the ecstasy of a youth whom the sounding cataract haunted like a passion. There is, to be sure, a similarity between this passage in "Tintern Abbey" and 140-7, but so is there between it and "To the Daisy" (de S., note to A 191), which certainly does not refer to the dominion of the eye.<sup>10</sup>)

131-9. Light is thrown on the way Wordsworth worked by the surprising fact that in W, the earliest manuscript, these lines come shortly after xiv. A 165 (see de S., 606) and have nothing to do with the dominance of the eye but with the warfare waged against the higher love by the cares and ills of daily life. In the W variant of A 178-80 "this agency" is the higher love. The last two lines of this variant are similar to xiv. 157-62, which originally stood but a page from them. A 185 is changed but slightly from the eleventh line given in de S., 606.

✓ 134-9. ("Nature" probably means external Nature; "themselves," all sense impressions; "Liberty," not political liberty but freedom of the spirit, emancipation from servitude to any or all of the senses. A good illustration of what is meant may be found in ii. 302-11: darkness revealed the "power in sound To breathe an elevated mood, by form Or image unprofaned." So the song of the bird or the perfume of the flower may distract our attention from the sight of either. Wordsworth perhaps implies that gradually, with the assistance of the heart (99-101), a synthesis of sense impressions is made, in contrast to the analysis which prevails under the despotism of the eye. He returns to the idea in xiv. 78-86 (A 74-84 is clearer) and had probably discussed it with Coleridge, who wrote:

the poet must likewise understand and command what Bacon calls the *vestigia communia* of the senses, the latency of all in each, and more especially as by a magical *penna duplex*, the excitement of vision by sound and the exponents of sound.<sup>11</sup>

137-9. That is, "the mind Is lord and master . . . outward sense Is but the obedient servant of her will" (A 271-3). When things are as they should be the mind uses sense impressions "to the great ends of Liberty and Power"—that is, inner liberty (see xiv. 131-2, A 114) and inner power (viii. 597-607 n.),—but when the eye obtains absolute dominion nature is sought for her own sake, that is, for the sake of visual impressions.

142. Substituted for A 188-90.

146. *Proud*: See 109 n.

151-73. As to the person referred to in these lines, it may be worth noting that the A<sup>2</sup>C variants of A 200-3 have "her years ran parallel with mine" and that Mary Hutchinson was only four months younger than the poet whereas Dorothy was nearly two years younger. Furthermore, "such charm Of sweetness" (A 216-17) suggests Mary rather than Dorothy.

152-3. Much better than the awkward A 200-2. "Mistress": ruler.

154. *taste*: See p. 561 above.

156-60. Like A 234-9 [184-9], these lines suggest that Nature can do no wrong, that we should accept whatever she offers without comparison or criticism and without wishing anything different—should love, not judge. But such an attitude is impossible to a thinking man and the mature Wordsworth, who took a keen interest in landscape gardening (that is, in selected and arranged nature), could not have held it. He is merely pointing out that, if one is to receive the spiritual ministry of nature, an attitude of grateful acceptance and sympathetic understanding rather than criticism is necessary. Cf. v. 284-7; xiii. 61-3.

De S., 592-4. The first twelve lines of this "overflow" are found near the end of MS JJ, between i. A 663 and xiii. A 47. Lines 39-89 are considered on pp. 103-5 above; for "awe" (61) see Chapter III; for "admiration" (65) see pp. 480-92 above; and for "heart" (69, 76), "Affections" (71), "feelings" (73), "benevolence" (88), see Chapter II. Possibly "feed" (29) should be "feel"; the word missing in 32 may be "natural." "The love of order" (34) probably means the love of putting things in order, of arranging and systematizing

them. Preoccupation with man-made things is likely to make one narrow, complacent, blind to all that cannot be pigeon-holed or tabulated. But whatever is living has in it an unpredictable element and, as nature makes us feel the grandeur and mystery of life and our own ignorance, familiarity with grand natural objects and phenomena keeps one from littleness, rigidity, and pride. With 39-41 compare xiii. 20-39 and *Excursion*, iv. 1207-29; on 43 see i. 409 n. "Its own works" (47) repeats "the things Our hands have form'd" (32-3).

A 230-40, W variant. Cf. 275-7, A 271-3. "Undelighted looked on all delight" is derived from *Paradise Lost*, iv. 286, "Saw undelighted all delight."

180-3. Pre-existence is not implied in these lines, which present a picture of the child's first impressions of this world very different from that given in v. 512-22.

187. *humility*: Cf. 109 n.

195-6. The figure of a pair of scales in which custom does not weigh things justly is not in A 245-6. "Wantonness" (A 245): perversity.

203. This line connects the paragraph in which it occurs with those that follow, which record two "visitings of imaginative power." The connection is further emphasized by "creative" in 207 (on which see ii. 245-61 n.), which is paraphrased in A 270-3 and repeated in 275b-7a.

✓ 208-335. In this important and characteristic passage<sup>12</sup> Wordsworth presents three of his favorite ideas: the creative power of the imagination, the renovating virtue of the memory of simple incidents or sights, and the spiritual power to be derived from recollections of childhood. Of the last two he was probably conscious before he put the experiences into verse but of the first there is no trace in the earliest account. This account, in manuscript V, is also different in other respects: it is briefer, less philosophical, and is placed in an entirely different setting, along with other incidents of childhood and immediately after the description of finding the body of the drowned man (v. 426-59),—which itself is introduced as one of the "effects as cannot . . . Be regularly classed" (V variant of v. A 450-72). It is prefaced by the remark:



I might advert  
To numerous accidents in flood or field  
    . . . that impressed my mind  
With images to which in following years  
Far other feelings were attached.

(V variant of v. A 472)

Nothing is said about the mind's being "lord and master" and there is no clear suggestion that the "fructifying Virtue" of the incidents is due to this mastery. Indeed, the second episode is introduced as "another scene which left a kindred power Implanted in my mind,"—which implies that the mind is merely receptive, passive, and not the supremely important transforming agent that it seemed later. Yet the imagination is referred to, for we are told that through the memory of such scenes

our minds  
Especially the imaginative power  
Are nourished and invisibly repair'd.

(V variant of A 264-5)

Besides, there is emphasis on the commonplaceness of what was actually seen as compared with the "visionary dreariness" which gave it significance.<sup>13</sup>

Such was the account Wordsworth composed either in Germany or shortly after his return to the north. Some four or five years later he wrote in MS W lines corresponding to 261-80, 286-7, which refer to later visits to "the melancholy beacon," affirm that man does not receive but creates his spiritual greatness, the base of which is to be found in childhood,<sup>14</sup> and introduce another of the "incidents that may explain . . . My restoration." At the same time he also added, without definitely associating them with the "spots of time," lines corresponding to 151-207, which include the account of his recovering his earlier attitude towards nature.

(There is no certainty as to where he then intended to insert the two episodes but, as he had already mentioned their relation to the imagination<sup>15</sup> and had connected the second of them with his restoration,<sup>16</sup> he probably by 1804 planned them for approximately their present place. Here at least he put them when, in April, 1805, he wrote XII, using for an introduction to

them the latter part of 151-207, which he had composed the year before possibly with this end in view. This introduction may have suggested to him the advisability of explaining more fully why sights so "ordinary" meant so much to him,—although he had already developed a marked tendency to give philosophical explanations of incidents originally recorded (as had not been the case with these) merely for their own sakes. At any rate, it was not until this second review of the passage that he gave it an explicit interpretation by adding the important lines A 269-73. The interpretation thus added seems to me not factitious and forced—as are the reasons assigned for narrating the meeting with the discharged soldier and the discovery of the drowned man's body—but incomplete. There is no misrepresentation, only lack of clarity in both thought and expression. Furthermore, neither in A 269-73 nor elsewhere in A are these episodes connected with the poet's restoration nor is it made clear how their renovating virtue was exercised or why their influence was so strong and salutary. Of these matters the final text has even less to say; indeed there are few passages in *The Prelude* where the early manuscripts are so helpful as they are here.

As the title of this book suggests and as the W variant of A 338-45 affirms, Wordsworth intended in these episodes to show how his imagination was "restored" by the recollection of occasions on which it had been powerfully exerted. (Apparently in the autumn or winter of 1795 (or perhaps in 1796), when he was beginning to find himself again, he was greatly encouraged and strengthened by the recollection of incidents like the two here related and by the significance he now found in them. (His imagination had "once . . . been strong"; had been able to invest an ordinary place with visionary dreariness; it could work like transformations again. Here was a power before which the material world was as potter's clay; and the power was his. But it was very different from the kind of intellectual activity which for some time had held him in subjection and despair. It was not logic but mystery, not analysis but creation. With the renewal of his faith in the imagination came a renewal of imaginative power; his thralldom to reason and taste was at an end for he "seemed . . . to gain clear sight

Of a new world," one not revealed to reason although "ruled by those fixed laws Whence spiritual dignity originates" (xiii. 48-50, 355-73).

In an illuminating discussion of the "spots of time" Mr. D. G. James affirms that much of their significance was due to the distressing nature of the two incidents. Previously, in Mr. James's opinion, Wordsworth had thought of the imagination as dealing only with idyllic things, with delightful scenes and occasions. In consequence it could not help him when he fell into despair; it was forgotten when the outcome of the Revolution brought him face to face with stern realities. In his recollection of these two happenings, however, "a finality of desolation is incorporated into a supreme object of imaginative contemplation."

In both cases the scene was bare, wild, swept with wind and mist, untouched by gentleness or softness of colour; in both were features marked by a curious stillness; in the one, the naked pool, the beacon, the girl bearing a pitcher on her head; in the other, the sheep, the tree, the stone wall—all set around with tempest and vast expanse. It is this which, in each case, held his imagination. . . . [He now realized] the power and adequacy of his imagination to include in its synthesis the whole world of human suffering.<sup>17</sup>

Against this interpretation one might urge that there is no suggestion of it in *The Prelude*, that Wordsworth declares,

(Still to the very going-out of youth),  
I too exclusively esteemed *that* love,  
And sought *that* beauty, which, as Milton sings,  
Hath terror in it, (xiv. 243-6)

that in MS V the passage which immediately precedes the "spots of time" mentions

numerous accidents in flood or field  
Quarry or moor, or mid the winter snows  
Distresses and disasters, tragic facts,  
(V variant of v. A 472)

and finally that the "spots of time" are spoken of not as unusual occurrences but as "scattered everywhere" (224) so that what is said of them is applicable to a number of the episodes

narrated in *The Prelude*. It seems likely, therefore, that Wordsworth's youthful imagination had been exercised upon disasters with considerable frequency so that he would hardly think of the imagination as a faculty concerned exclusively with the pleasant side of life. It is also doubtful that he thought of desolation as the distinguishing feature of the "spots of time." Yet it does seem probable that his imagination was restored by a realization of the power it had previously exercised and particularly by the power of transcending misfortune.

These two incidents differ from the more usual experiences, likewise treasured in the memory, with which some of Wordsworth's better-known poems deal. The sight of "a host of golden daffodils" brought undreamed-of wealth because they often flashed

upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;

the memory of the country round about Tintern Abbey  
furnished

In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,  
... passing even into my purer mind,  
With tranquil restoration;

and of a lovely bay on Loch Lomond he wrote:

In spots like these it is we prize  
Our Memory, feel that she hath eyes. . . .  
For I, methinks, till I grow old,  
As fair before me shall behold . . .  
The lake, the bay, the waterfall.<sup>18</sup>

(The recollection of places like these, beautiful in themselves and associated with pleasant emotions, brought joy and "restoration" but apparently no "deepest feeling that the mind is lord and master," no sense of infinitude or of the "dark abyss" over which Wordsworth was wont to brood; whereas to the scenes described in the present passage, though not associated with pleasant experiences or beautiful in themselves—indeed, they are ordinary enough—the mature man "often would repair and thence would drink, As at a fountain" (A 384-5). The all-important difference is that in the former instances it is the receptive powers of the mind that are chiefly concerned

and the scenes themselves that are significant; in the latter the scenes have been transformed by the imagination and it is to the imagination<sup>19</sup> that their importance is due. As Wordsworth wrote of *The White Doe of Rylstone*, the objects in that poem

. . . derive their influence not from properties inherent in them, not from what they are actually in themselves, but from such as are bestowed upon them by the minds of those who are conversant with or affected by those objects. Thus the Poetry . . . proceeds whence it ought to do, from the soul of Man, communicating its creative energies to the images of the external world.<sup>20</sup>

These "spots of time" also help us to understand the way in which the imagination works. Emotion—one of the cardinal points in Wordsworth's creed (see Chapter II)—plays a large part in them by preparing the boy to receive and by stimulating him to transform the impressions that are to nourish his later years.<sup>21</sup> In each case he is deeply stirred beforehand, by terror in the first instance, by expectation and longing in the second, so that his mind is sensitized like a photographic plate to preserve the scene that is next presented and to invest it with glory not its own. In the second instance the impression is deepened by what followed, the death of the father, which seemed to the boy a punishment for his impatience. Each occasion, moreover, is marked by the presence of mystery and fear—elements potent in stirring the imagination; note 246-7, 254-6, 272-5, and the vivid lines (317-23) which conclude the account of the second incident, especially the picture of the mist that "advanced in such indisputable shapes."

Yet Mr. Beatty cannot be right in regarding terror as the memorable feature of the first episode,<sup>22</sup> for in that case the mind would not be lord and master nor the imaginative power nourished. Furthermore, Wordsworth himself makes clear that he remembered, not the place of the gibbet, but the scene that met his eyes after he had fled this terrifying spot and reascended to the bare common—that is, the pool, the beacon, the woman and her wind-blow garments—and, most of all, the "visionary dreariness Which . . . Invested" it.

210. The unpleasant alliteration (iii. 28 n.) of the "three

"vi" sounds in A 260 is eliminated from the final text, although "renovating" is today more suggestive of spring cleaning than of the imagination.

213. *trivial*: See iv. 278-306 n.

220-3. More tersely and vigorously expressed than in A 270-4. "Knowledge" is likewise more accurate than "feeling" since in the present instance the supremacy of the mind is a conclusion reached through reflection. Contrast 127-31 and compare 207; ii. 245-61 and n., 358-76; vi. 736-8; "Most sweet it is," 11-14.

223-9. MS V is better than any of the later versions since it includes the important assertion, most awkwardly expressed in A 276b-7a and later omitted (presumably as dubious), that such moments are chiefly found in (not "date From," as 224-5) our childhood, and since it has three excellent lines in place of the awkward A 280 and the pompous 226. Perhaps the first part of this passage was changed because such moments are not chiefly found in our *first* childhood, as V asserts. "Taking their date From" (224-5): beginning in.

246-7. Briefer and much more vivid than A 300-2. Note the alliteration "fled, Faltering and faint" (see iii. 28 n.).

258-9. Much better than A 313-4.

260. *female*: See de S., xlvii-iii.

266. The de S. note to this line has, in the first edition, "near Penrith, in the summer of 1790, with his sister and Mary Hutchinson." In later editions this is changed to "near Penrith. (For the difficulty in dating this visit *v.* note to vi. [A] 216-17)." A supplementary note, pp. [608 F-G], to vi. A 216-45 suggests that the change from "those two dear Ones" (A 317) to "the loved one" was due to Wordsworth's realization that in the summer of 1789 (vi. 224-36 gives us the date of his love-affair) Dorothy was not with him. Cf. also xiii. 120-7.

✓ (269-70. Feeling connected with a certain person or place strengthens a later feeling connected with that person or place; and if we have shown strength in one field, such as the imagination, we gain strength in other fields, the emotional, the volitional, and that of ethical insight.) So to Wordsworth's imagination in 1795 came strength from the memory of what

it had done nearly twenty years earlier. The "power" (268) he had formerly exercised was his to use again if he would. Leslie Stephen may have had this passage in mind when he wrote:

If you have made love in a palace, according to Mr. Disraeli's prescription, the sight of it will recall the splendour of the object's dress or jewellery; if, as Wordsworth would prefer, with a background of mountains, it will appear in later days as if they had absorbed, and were always ready again to radiate forth, the tender and hallowing influences which then for the first time entered your life. The elementary and deepest passions are most easily associated with the sublime and beautiful in nature. . . . And therefore if you have been happy enough to take delight in these natural and universal objects in the early days, when the most permanent associations are formed, the sight of them in later days will bring back by preordained and divine symbolism whatever was most ennobling in your early feelings. The vulgarising associations will drop off of themselves, and what was pure and lofty will remain.<sup>23</sup>

Such is undoubtedly Wordsworth's teaching—e. g., in i. 404-14 (see note)—but not in the present passage, since the preceding episode is concerned neither with the sublime and beautiful in nature nor with the ennobling in feeling. See x. 595-603 n.

272-82. Much like iii. 180-7; 272-3 recalls vi. 594-6 and xiv. 70-4 (note A 71-3). "Depth," "base," "hiding-places" carry on the idea of "mystery." See pp. 141-6 above.

274-5. Wordsworth may mean simply that man's greatness rests upon the power of his imagination to transform reality, as exemplified in the preceding incident. But if so, why the emphasis upon mystery? why "I am lost"? why the cautious "something of the *base*"? On the other hand, 272-86, although suggested by the gibbet episode and more especially by 261-71, may be a more general comment on the mystery of human nature, which haunted Wordsworth; and 274-5 may refer not only to the child's imaginative power but to his freedom from subjection to the material world under which the adult labors (see v. 507-9 n.), to his sense of wonder (see pp. 480-92 above), to the freshness and vividness of his sense impressions, and to the fact that it is the images and experiences stored up in childhood upon which the adult imagination

chiefly works. The "mystery" lies partly in the close connection between man's highest endowments and powers shared by almost every child.

276-7. Man's greatness rests upon his active, creative powers; see 204-7, A 270-3; ii. 245-61 n. Here he must stand alone; see xiv. 209-18. The ministry of external nature is not something that is received passively; the order, beauty, meaning which the mind seems to find in nature and life are put there by the mind's creative powers. Wordsworth is not thinking for the moment of the Soul immanent in nature, although that is not an influence received passively. It should be observed that he agrees with Coleridge, whom he here echoes, in holding that "we receive but what we give." It is possible that the lines refer merely to the creative power of the imagination as shown in the gibbet episode, but the A<sup>2</sup> variant of A 329, "Mysterious soul of Man," does not suggest this interpretation.

279-80. If 272-86 refer only to the preceding incident, the interpretation of Mr. Basil Willey is right: "Habitually, by this time, Wordsworth had come to find in *memory* his chief reservoir of strength. Certain memories are the 'hiding-places of man's power'; memories, that is, of former successful exertions of imaginative strength."<sup>24</sup> If, however, 272-86 constitute a general comment, the latter part of the de S. note to xiv. A 71 interprets them admirably and "the hiding-places of man's power" may be taken as another of the expressions (see ii. 315-19; iv. 162-8; viii. 597-607 n.) which point to Wordsworth's belief that the sources of spiritual power are not only deep but hidden—hard to find and harder to explain to others. Much of his meditation and not a little of his best verse were concerned with these hidden springs. Observe that the reading of A 336-7 is "the hiding-places of *my* power *Seem* open."

283. *we*: Why not "I"?

287-316. There is a brief description of this incident in *The Vale of Esthwaite*, 418-27 (*P. W.*, *Youth*, pp. 279-80).

288-98, 307. The early readings are simpler and, except in A 351, A 355, generally better. The repetition in "day . . . holidays" probably caused A 346 to be changed.

317-23. The effectiveness of these bleak lines, as of 249-61, is due in part to the repetition of details already mentioned.



Of 317-20 Dean Sperry writes: "The lapse of years has not effaced from that quatrain its author's hallmark, nor has studied imitation ever duplicated the original. In this area 'others abide our question,' Wordsworth is free."<sup>25</sup>

332. *agitations*: Pleasant, stimulating excitations; see vii. 44-8 n. and cf. ii. 298; x. 434. The first part of this passage is clearer in D<sup>3</sup>E: "from the recollections of the scenes just described come pleasant agitations which blend with impulses from the stormy night or the agitated grove to inspire effort tempered by pleasing fear." The last three obscure lines of D<sup>3</sup>E were entirely changed in the final text, which claims only that the recollection of the second spot of time beguiles or animates a vacant hour. Some uncertainty as to this result was suggested until the final revision of 1832-39: "I do not doubt" (A 385), "belike" (DE variant of A 385), "unknown to me" (A 388), "Of source and tendency to me unknown" (D<sup>2</sup> variant of 329-35). Indeed, 326b-35, a survival from earlier accounts, confuse the reader by attributing to the second episode a significance other than the transforming power of the imagination. As to "pleasing fear," see Chapter III.

A 390-7. Wisely dropped. The conclusion in the 1850 text is better but is inferior to that in D<sup>2</sup>.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See de S, xxii, xxiii, xxxvi-vii, xl. I say "seem to have been" because it is not certain that Wordsworth composed the last three books in the order in which he intended them to be read.

<sup>2</sup> Wordsworth discusses taste in the "Essay, supplementary to the Preface," where he says: "As Nations decline in productive and creative power . . . [they] value themselves upon a presumed refinement of judging," that is, upon taste, and make "a passive faculty . . . paramount among the faculties conversant with the fine arts." "Proportion and congruity," he continues, ". . . are subjects upon which taste may be trusted. . . . But the profound and the exquisite in feeling, the lofty and universal in thought and imagination . . . [i.e.] the pathetic and the sublime" are not (*Oxf. W.*, pp. 951-2). In the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth refers to men "who talk of Poetry as of a matter of amusement and idle pleasure, who will converse . . . about a taste for Poetry . . . as if it were a thing as indifferent as a taste for rope-dancing, or Frontinac or Sherry" (*Oxf. W.*, p. 938).

<sup>3</sup> "Wordsworth," in *Appreciations*.

<sup>4</sup> Preface to *Prometheus Unbound*.

<sup>5</sup> *Political Justice*, 3 ed, 1798, I, 68.

<sup>6</sup> *Aristotle's Poetics*, translated by S. H. Butcher, 1902, p. 35. A similar contrast between history and poetry is implied in Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, II, iv.

<sup>7</sup> For the influence of Gilpin on another lover of nature, and one as independent and devoted as Wordsworth, see William D. Templeman, "Thoreau, Moralizer of the Picturesque," *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, XLVII (September, 1932), 864-889. Christopher Hussey's *The Picturesque*, 1927, is an illuminating treatment of its subject, as is the tenth chapter of S. H. Monk's *The Sublime*, New York, 1935.

<sup>8</sup> Edition of 1793, line 317.

<sup>9</sup> Hazlitt, "Mr. Wordsworth," *Spirit of the Age*, in *Works*, ed. Waller and Glover, IV, 277.

<sup>10</sup> Since these lines were written, Professor W. G. Fraser has presented, in an admirable, closely-reasoned note (*Review of English Studies*, ix [October, 1933], 457-62), five additional reasons for attributing the dominance of the eye to 1795 not 1793. His suggestion that "Tintern Abbey," 66-83, refers to 1791 rather than 1793 is alluring.

<sup>11</sup> *Biographia Literaria*, chapter XXII (ed. Shawcross, II, 103).

<sup>12</sup> It is characteristic in dealing with nature in her less winning moods (see i. 416-18 n.), with childhood, and with a trivial incident, in being written long after the event, in exemplifying "emotion recollected in tranquillity" as well as the transforming power of the imagination, and in furnishing an "intimation of something illimitable, over-arching or breaking into the customary 'reality,'" which Professor Bradley finds the soul of Wordsworth's most typical poems (*Oxford Lectures*, 1909, p. 134). It illustrates several of the points stressed in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*: "The principal object, then, proposed in these Poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and . . . to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect; and, further, and above

all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them . . . the primary laws of our nature chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. . . . Another circumstance . . . which distinguishes these Poems from the popular Poetry of the day . . . the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling" (*Oxf. W.*, 935).

<sup>13</sup> Mr Thurston Taylor calls attention (*Modern Language Notes*, XLIV, March, 1929, p. 187) not only to the absence from the account in MS V of any reference to the active powers of the mind but to the fact that in V the "spots of time" are followed by i. 544-635, in which the language of associational psychology is used (note the V variants of i. A 572-3, A 602, A 617-20) and the mind is spoken of as passive. Mr. Taylor is mistaken, however, in implying that when Wordsworth wrote MS V he conceived the mind as passive, for V contains lines corresponding to ii. 232-72, 358-76, in which the creative powers of even the babe and the youth are insisted on, as well as to 252-60 of the present book, which at least suggest that the impressiveness of the gibbet episode is due to the mind's creative activity.

<sup>14</sup> This last had already been suggested; see V variant of A 274-81.

<sup>15</sup> In the line, quoted above, which in MS V follows A 264.

<sup>16</sup> The W variant of A 338-45 has "My restoration" and ends with the words with which the second episode begins. The first episode is not in W (which contains only disconnected fragments of XII) but it is referred to in A 316-26, which is in W.

<sup>17</sup> D. G. James, *Scepticism and Poetry*, 1937, pp. 160, 158, 162.

<sup>18</sup> "To a Highland Girl," 66-77; cf. i. 599-602, "The Solitary Reaper," 31-2; and "Tintern Abbey," 64-5 ("In this moment there is life and food For future years").

<sup>19</sup> As is suggested by 201-4 and by the line which in V follows A 264, and by 219-23 (A 269-73).

<sup>20</sup> Letter to Wrangham of January 18, 1816.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *Excursion*, i. 136-8:

deep feelings had impressed  
So vividly great objects that they lay  
Upon his mind like substances.

<sup>22</sup> *William Wordsworth, his Doctrine and Art*, 2 ed., 1927, p. 164 (University of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature, no. 24).

<sup>23</sup> "Wordsworth's Ethics," *Hours in a Library*, 1874, III, 155-6.

<sup>24</sup> *The Seventeenth Century Background*, 1934, p. 307.

<sup>25</sup> W. L. Sperry, *Wordsworth's Anti-Climax*, Cambridge, Mass., 1935, p. 169.

## BOOK XIII (A XII)

I ask not for the great, the remote, the romantic; what is doing in Italy or Arabia; what is Greek art, or Provençal minstrelsy; I embrace the common, I explore and sit at the feet of the familiar, the low. Give me insight into to-day, and you may have the antique and future worlds.

Emerson, *The American Scholar*

The most original element in Wordsworth's poetry is discovered in his faith that humble life can yield experience, worthy of the imagination in its most ambitious endeavour. B. Ifor Evans, *Times Literary Supplement*, September 7, 1940

THIS book deals with Wordsworth's recovery from the despair into which Godwinian rationalism and his disappointment in the French Revolution had plunged him, with the development of his faith in common man and of his belief that his mission lay in making verse "deal boldly with substantial things." Thus the subject is much the same as that of VIII, "Love of Nature leading to Love of Man," although here the emphasis is less on nature than on the nobility and dignity of common man and on the propriety of treating him and everyday life in poetry. Probably it was because these latter subjects had not been touched on in XII that Wordsworth, although still giving them a single title, made two short books of XII and XIII, which had originally been one. XII deals mainly with the imagination as it relates to nature and with how in Wordsworth's case it was "impaired"; XIII with the imagination as it relates to man and with how in Wordsworth's case it was "restored." As in VIII, it is admiration for man not love for him that is the topic.<sup>1</sup> The period covered probably extends from the close of 1795 to the summer of 1797 (de S., 586), when he was twenty-five and a half to twenty-seven and a quarter years old, but 312-78 revert to two days in August or September, 1793. Lines corresponding to 41-7 were composed during the summer of 1798;<sup>2</sup> lines corresponding to 186-205 probably between October and December, 1800; rough drafts of other passages—such as 120-60, 261-78, 312-49—may also have existed before the first three weeks of May, 1805, when the

book as a whole was written. To the list of MSS should be added "for ll. [A] 47-52 JJ."

1-50. The line of thought seems to be: "These helpful agitations of the spirit mentioned at the close of XII are derived from External Nature, from whom likewise comes calm. This dual gift even the humblest share but there is a rarer blessing of which I speak from my own experience at this time,—External Nature is the image of philosophic Nature, that is, of true reason and right conduct, because she exemplifies gradual development and permanence and so teaches patience, distrust of rapid or radical changes and of mere theory. Thus it was that she now revived in me that love of the unassuming things of the world and that reverence for humble man which she had early taught me, and thus, as I recovered, 'I found Once more in Man an object of delight' and of imagination." Cf. de S., 593-4, *Excursion*, iv. 1207-29. (As is usual with those who hold up nature as an ideal, Wordsworth here ignores matters which do not agree with the teaching he wishes to inculcate. Sudden, radical changes are by no means rare in external nature, and eternal flux is as surely there as seeming permanence. See Chapter vi.)

Contrast the state of mind here described with that pictured in xi. 235-44, 287-91, and note the anti-intellectualism (see Chapter vii) of 26-7.

1-10. This quiet, contemplative passage recalls the beginning of v; cf. also i. 280-1; in expression the opening and closing lines of the paragraph are admirable. The early versions are four lines longer and otherwise inferior. To be sure, "sun and shower" (A 5), which is dropped, is a better figure than "horns" (presumably of cattle, sheep, and deer), which is kept, but A 6-7 are awkward, intellectual prose, "Hence . . . exists" (A 7-8) is wordy, and A 12 unnecessary. Likewise 11 is much better than A 15. A somewhat similar thought will be found in lines 3-4 of B(3) variant of ii. A 181-3, in lines 2-3 of the fragment included in the de S. note to xiv. 63-76, and in xiv. 166. See also Alice Snyder's *The Critical Principle of the Reconciliation of Opposites as Employed by Coleridge*, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1918. Presumably these lines are closely connected with the end of XII, which, in MS Z, they follow

immediately without a break. "Emotion" (1)—which corresponds to "excitation" (6) and "energy" (8) just as "calmness" (2) corresponds to "peace" (6) and "stillness" (9)—would thus refer to "agitations" of xii. 332 ("workings of the spirit," D<sup>3</sup>E; see vii. 44-8 n.). Lines 9-10 are another expression of "wise passiveness."

8. *energy*: Would not "stimulus" or "impulse" be more logical in view of "excitation" and of A 12?

14. *Smooth task*: Cf. ii. 228 and de S. n.; for "sweet" (A 18) see de S., xlv.

16-39. One sentence of twenty-four lines.

16-19. There are five versions of this passage, of which the last is the smoothest. "Desperate" (A 20) should have been kept and a comma inserted before it to indicate that it modifies "I" not "knowledge," as is clear in A<sup>2</sup>. "Dawn" carries out the figure of "benighted." The tedious, almost monosyllabic wordiness of A 23 is avoided in 19.

17. Wordsworth may have intended to contrast "human life" with nature, but in A<sup>2</sup> (where "life" first occurs) he says, "I roamed The path of life," and in A<sup>3</sup>CD, "Roam'd I the plain of life," i. e., I lived.

32. *objects that endure*: Contrasted with "present objects" (30); see i. 409 n.

34-44. There are many differences between the early and the final form of this passage: "throwing off" is better than "leaving . . . behind" (A 38); "and individual" (A 40) was wisely dropped since it is implied in "man" (35) and is confusing; "there" (A 40), meaning in social life, was probably kept for emphasis despite the cacophonous "Whate'er there"; "unchanged . . . revolving" (37-9) is clearer if less pleasant than A 42-4; the final text avoids attributing the change to "Nature" (40, A 45), adds the derogatory reference to history (42), omits "action" (A 49), and adds the clarifying "energy detached From moral purpose" (43-4). For Wordsworth's indifference to history and action see viii. 617-25 n., xii. A 90-1 n., xiii. 128-33 n.

✓ 41-7. This admirable and characteristic passage must have pleased Wordsworth since it is found in two other places in his manuscripts. Originally it formed part of the overflow from

"Nutting," whence, along with other lines from this same overflow, it was transferred to the end of JJ (which consists mainly of the first book of *The Prelude*), whence in turn it was moved to its final, much more philosophic setting near the end of the poem. JJ has, after 47, the interesting but esthetically ineffectual addition, "but more than all The things that live in passion."<sup>3</sup> Yet, as A. C. Bradley remarks, Wordsworth's attention to "the unassuming things" "was only formed, it would seem, under his sister's influence, after his recovery from the crisis that followed the ruin of his towering hopes in the French Revolution," whereas his "first bent," which always "retained its force," was "towards grandeur, austerity, sublimity" (*Oxford Lectures*, 1909, p. 126; cf. xiv. 232-66).

48-50. The theme of much of the present book. Contrast xi. 247-54, 306-20; xii. 57-74; and cf. viii. A 630-9.

50. *pure imagination*: Contrast "false imagination" of xi. A 848 and see xi. A 844 n.

52. *the intellectual eye*: The non-physical eye, that is, the mind, but not the analytical reason of Godwin. See ii. 315 n.; xii. 45 n. Wordsworth introduces the eye in order to contrast it with the hand (54); great truths, he asserts, are gained by a distant view from a height ("as the horizon of my mind enlarged," 51), little ones by being so close to an object that one may touch and handle it. In xi. A 844-6 (see notes) he says that when he was misled by false philosophy he had

sacrificed

The exactness of a comprehensive mind  
To scrupulous and microscopic views.

56. Not so much emotions (since the intellectual eye was the instructor) as the instincts, opinions, attitudes which Wordsworth had held in his youth and perhaps up to his rationalistic period. Cf. xii. A 238. They were "feelings" rather than reasoned convictions.

59-63. Cf. v. 284-7; xii. 156-8; and, for "familiar," 144 n. "Projects" (61), since it merely repeats "schemes" (60), is not so good as "virtues" (A 66), but 62, an excellent and characteristic line, is much better than A 67. "Present" was a happy addition.

64-88. One sentence twenty-five lines long.

66-8. *the men . . . world*: Not primarily radicals but politicians and statesmen ("statists") of all kinds, and economists.

70-96. "Theories" (70) is not found in the vaguer A 75-6 nor is 73-7 with its piety in A; 80-2 and 92-6 are briefer and otherwise better than A 82-5, A 95-100. "Appetites" (91) is an unfortunate addition if the reference is, as in A, simply to food, drink, clothing, and shelter; but it may have occurred to Wordsworth that even if these "obstructions" did not prove "insurmountable" the animal appetites would hardly "vanish into air." Nor, for the matter, would selfishness—but 88-93 seems "built on theories Vague and unsound," a survival of his French, doctrinaire period.

76-8. Cf. "Humanity," 88-91:

heartless schools,  
That to an Idol, falsely called "the Wealth  
Of Nations," sacrifice a People's health,  
Body and mind and soul.

(79-220. Here, as often, Wordsworth interrupts and obscures his argument by introducing passages which do not bear directly on it (see ii. 203-75 n., 332-8 n., iv. 93-135 n.). Like Emerson, though neglectful of transitions he is less abrupt and more consecutive in his thinking than he appears to be. His digressions may confuse his readers but seldom mislead him. Here his reasoning is clearer if one passes over, for the time being, 106-60. In 142 and 186, where he seems to begin a new subject—particularly as in each case the lines immediately preceding sound like the rounded conclusion of a theme—he is really continuing the old.

(The thought runs somewhat as follows: "Having gained a better understanding of the worth of individual man, I asked myself, 'Why do so few men, as is generally supposed, achieve the excellence of which they are capable?' If it is because of the labor necessary to supply our daily wants, the unfortunate consequences of such labor should be most clearly seen in those upon whom it rests most heavily. Accordingly I turned to those persons who live by undue bodily toil, not workers in factories or in cities, where the conditions of factory life or city



life and not the labor might cause the shortcomings (cf. 195-205), but to those who labored in the fields, 'the natural abodes of men' (102). Here I found that my initial supposition was mistaken since humble tillers of the soil have far more real feeling and just sense than is commonly supposed. These excellences, I learned, are not, as has been claimed, dependent on what we call education or upon familiarity with the talking world; toil does not necessarily mean ignorance, and virtue need not be rare. We have misled one another and have been deceived by books which, written for the wealthy few, magnify the differences between men in the various stations of life and neglect the heart which is common to all."

80-1. This feeling for mankind was stronger in Wordsworth than love. Note that "worth" was a late addition and compare 152, 286 n.; viii. 644-5; pp. 108-12, 364 above; and Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, "homage paid to the native and naked dignity of man" (*Oxf. W.*, p. 938).

94-103. "Wordsworth was resolved to reduce human life to its lowest terms, to see whether it is in itself a thing of worth." "He . . . chose for his experiment the least complex forms of society known to him" (Raleigh, *Wordsworth*, 1903, pp. 176, 172).

102. In speaking of farms as "the natural abodes of men" Wordsworth falls into some of the confusions and fallacies that beset the use of the terms "nature" and "natural."<sup>4</sup> He implies that men of uncontaminated tastes instinctively prefer farm to city life—which it would be very difficult to prove and which is probably true of some men but not of others—or that men originally lived on farms. Now primitive man lived in trees and caves and, despite viii. 124-7, where the occupations of the dalesmen are praised because Nature dictates them, certainly did not cultivate the soil; and, although cities represent a later stage of development, they are as "natural abodes of men"—since men have built them of their own accord and have chosen to live in them—as are farms. Furthermore, he implies that, because farm life is "natural" in one or both of these senses, it is therefore a better life for men of today, a conclusion which is absolutely unwarranted. Fishing and hunting probably did not occur to Wordsworth yet they are the most

"natural" (in almost every sense of the term) of all the occupations pursued by men of today. The truth doubtless is that he did not seek out any class and that the questions asked in 87-92 did not occur to him until his renewed associations with the farmers about Racedown suggested the answer.

106-15. A surprising confession; contrast 80-1 (see note), viii. 608-11, but cf. viii. 617-22, A 841-2 and n. With 113-15, cf. viii. A 836-58.

117. *lonely roads*: See 162 n., 125, and Chapter iv.

120-7. Cf. *Excursion*, iii. 513-49, especially 532-9. The pessimism of 120-1 seems unwarranted.

122. *life's prime*: Since 124 and 128 refer to youth and 123 has "maid" not "woman," the phrase must mean "the 'springtime' of human life; the time of early manhood or womanhood, from about 21 to 28 years of age" (NED). Cf. ix. 140 and n. Presumably Wordsworth had in mind his walks with Annette and with Mary Hutchinson, perhaps also those with Dorothy.

✓ 128-33. (These lines are revealing as to Wordsworth's tastes and as to the happiness of the Racedown-Alfoxden days. The things that, after youthful love was past, he cared most for are included: wandering (see vi. 252 n.), communing with nature, meditating, composing poetry, and conversing with friends or with friendly persons. (Except in a vicarious way through his enjoyment of books of travel and of romantic adventure (iii. 433-44 n., vii. 77-84 n., ix. 204-8) the mature Wordsworth seems to have shown little appreciation of the joys of action and to have esteemed the active life much lower than the contemplative (see A 47-9, 267; xiv. A 164-5). It was his intense love of philosophical meditation that made the mind of man the main region of his song, that rendered the companionship of Coleridge unusually stimulating and delightful, that gave added attractions to nature and country life, which assist such meditation.

131-8. The construction is, "could meditate . . . and cull . . . or . . . Sing . . . And . . . Converse."

133-4. *lightsome . . . wind*: The early versions are free from this wretched Della Cruscanism, but none of the texts makes clear that Wordsworth was composing and not merely reciting verse.

135. *strange*: A 139-40 suggest the meaning, "fields to which the sound of poet's music was strange."

136. Cf. xii. 93-104 n.

142-60. An attractive digression. Cf. iv. A 363-8, vi. 252 n. A. C. Bradley calls attention to "the connection of this feeling of infinity and the endless passing of limits with Wordsworth's love of wandering, wanderers, and high roads" and compares "the enchantment of the question, *What, are you stepping westward?* 'twas a sound Of something without place or bound'" (*Oxford Lectures*, 140-1, n.). It is unfortunate that the admirable A<sup>2</sup> variant of A 152, "And regions of illimitable space," was not retained. As to "eternity," see pp. 239-45 above; as to "grandeur," see 80-1 n., 286 n.

142-5. There are seven versions of the beginning of this paragraph, of which the one finally selected is probably the best. That in A is abrupt; that in A<sup>2</sup>, though pleasant, probably seemed too long as well as a bit pretty.

143. *way*: See 162 n.

144-5. *wrought On*: "Fed" D; see Chapter x.

✓ 144. *Familiar object*: But it was familiar objects, especially if seen under unusual circumstances, that were most likely to work on Wordsworth's imagination and on which his imagination was most likely to work. The "spots of time" passage (xii. 208-335, especially 253-4) illustrates this admirably, as does Coleridge's remark that Wordsworth, in his part of the *Lyrical Ballads*, proposed "to give the charm of novelty to things of every day."<sup>5</sup> See also 356-7, 368-70; v. 379-88 and n.; xiv. 100-6 and 100-2 n.

157-9. Cf. "Beggars" and its "Sequel" and "Gipsies."

160-278. In *The Recluse*, i. i. 309-57, Wordsworth says that he did not come to Grasmere expecting to find the dalesmen perfect:

I look for Man,  
The common creature of the brotherhood,  
Differing but little from the Man elsewhere,  
For selfishness, and envy, and revenge,  
Ill neighbourhood—pity that this should be—  
Flattery and double-dealing, strife and wrong.

162. The repetition of "lonely roads" (117, 162)—cf.

"pathways" (117), "ways" (140), "way" (143), and "such walks" (179)—helps to bind the paragraphs together and to make the reasoning clearer. "Held Familiar talk with" (A 162-3) seems preferable to "speak Without reserve to," but Wordsworth may have felt that his talk with the farmers was hardly "familiar."

✓164. *passions*: Cf. "souls" (166), "feeling" (172), "affection, love" (186) together with the discussion that follows (186-205), and "the universal heart" (220), "passion" (236), "heart" (241). Wordsworth's high opinion of tillers of the soil was due in no small measure to his finding them possessed of "real feeling" (172). See also 241 n.; viii. A 841-2 n.; and Chapter II.

165. Perhaps added because of 265-75; cf. 172-4.

✓168-72. Wordsworth wishes to make three points: (1) that the true end of education is the acquisition of "real feeling and just sense" (see 164 n., 241 n.), (2) that this end is achieved, not in schools and books, but (3) in the "open schools" (163) in which tillers of the soil work. Rousseau may have influenced these ideas, which are strongly opposed to Godwin's. The passage is another illustration of Wordsworth's anti-intellectualism and of his interest in education; see notes to v and Chapter VII. See also the second paragraph of the extract from Wordsworth's letter to a friend (1806, *Memoirs*, II, 168-9) quoted in note to v. 341-6.

173. *the talking world*: Cf. 256-75.

174-8. Repeats 84-100. *Nature* (175): The cosmic order.

178. *intellectual*: See ii. 315 n.; xii. 45 n.

180. The effectiveness of the chiasmus (see ix. 117 n.) is somewhat marred by the run-over line and the strong pause after "steadiness"—for the semicolon in A 180 is presumably right.

✓186-94. Wordsworth wrote Charles James Fox, January 14, 1801, that "The Brothers" and "Michael" were "written with a view to shew that men who do not wear fine cloaths can feel deeply," and in a letter to "Christopher North" of June, 1802, he said: "Some cannot bear to see delicate and refined feelings ascribed to men in low conditions of society, because their vanity and self-love tell them that these belong only to

themselves and men like themselves in dress, station, and way of life." Several varieties of sentimentalism which exerted a powerful influence in the eighteenth century tended to make feeling—though fine rather than strong feeling was emphasized—a distinction of the chosen few. On the other hand, one aspect of romantic anti-rationalism was the theory that all men feel alike though they reason differently—see 217-20 n.

200-1. Poverty and excessive labor oppose to the love that is instinctive in man the deeper, animal instinct of self-preservation.

202-5. The addition of 203, which is not in A, makes the statement more nearly true, but A expressed Wordsworth's real feelings. See pp. 120, 436, 451 above.

205. The eye cannot feed the heart with the beauty of nature. Cf. 276.

209. *wealthy*: Would not "sophisticated" have been more accurate?

210-11. *debase The Many*: Books belittle the common man.

212-13. Lack the courage to tell the rugged truth but smooth it down to certain generally-accepted notions. "Effeminately" is a strange word here; contrast "boldly" (235), "with no timid step" (250), "dared" (252).

217-20. The emotional uniformitarianism of these lines recalls that expressed in Bernardin de St. Pierre's *Chaumière Indienne*, "Les hommes sentent tous de la même manière, et ils raisonnent différemment,"<sup>6</sup> and in the *Critical Review*, which declared "Shakespeare is to be tried by a more sure criterion [than taste], that of *feeling*, which is the same in all ages and all climates."<sup>7</sup> (The passage is closely connected with ii. 215-21, where the analytical reason is spoken of as "that false secondary power By which we multiply distinctions [and ignore] . . . The unity of all.") See ii. 203-32 n., 221 n., and Wordsworth's letters to Charles James Fox of January 14, 1801 (in which he expressed the hope that his poems showed "that our best qualities are possessed by men whom we are too apt to consider, not with reference to the points in which they resemble us, but to those in which they manifestly differ from us"), and to Crabb Robinson of the spring of 1835, in which he quotes a critic of his poems:

In my treatment of the intellectual instincts affections & passions of mankind, I am nobly distinguished by having drawn out into notice the points in which they resemble each other, in preference to dwelling, as dramatic Authors must do, upon those in which they differ. If my writings are to last, it will I myself believe, be mainly owing to this characteristic. They will please for the single cause, 'That we have all of us one human heart!'

Coleridge remarked: "We ought to suspect reasoning founded wholly on the difference of man from man, not on their commonnesses, which are infinitely greater."<sup>8</sup>

In emphasizing the constant factor in human experience, regarding all men as basically much the same, Wordsworth is in the classic tradition. It is the romanticist who stresses individual uniqueness, the unusual in character or experience, local color, transitory aspects of nature.

221-2. *A youthful traveller*: On his walking trip through France and Switzerland with Jones.

224-78. Cf. *Excursion*, i. 77-102.

225. *Nature*: A survival of Wordsworth's earlier pantheism; he seems to have had in mind a vague personification or embodiment of the wise and benevolent order which the universe exhibits. The idea that God originates this order is not precluded.

229. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, i. 372, "With gay religions full of pomp and gold."

230. *that protects*: The change eliminates four of the ten *s's* in A 229-30.

232-56. "Is there not," Wordsworth had asked in 1800,

An art, a music, and a strain of words  
That shall be like the acknowledged voice of life,  
Shall speak of what is done among the fields,  
Done truly there, or felt, of solid good  
And real evil, yet be sweet withal,  
More grateful, more harmonious than the breath,  
The idle breath of softest pipe attuned  
To pastoral fancies? (Recluse, i. i. 401-9)

✓ 241. *heart*: What is essential or fundamental in man. Wordsworth felt that most of the poetry of his day and of the preceding century dealt with trivialities or non-essentials; he therefore

turned from literature to life, to reality, "substantial things" and "the very heart of man." It was largely on this account that his verse aroused strong opposition and that it still lives. A similar movement has to be made in each of the arts every few decades. Humble life had been treated in poetry before Wordsworth wrote but never with the realism, the imagination, and the power that he brought to it, nor had the strength and depth of feeling of the poor previously received much attention (see 164 n., 168-72, and Chapter II). Walter Pater writes: "In much that he said in exaltation of rural life, he was but pleading indirectly for that sincerity, that perfect fidelity to one's own inward presentations, to the precise features of the picture within, without which any profound poetry is impossible."<sup>9</sup>

242-5. The meaning, as appears from Y, is those "who live In Nature's presence"; parentheses after "live" and "few" would make this clearer. Wordsworth knew that many "who live . . . In Nature's presence" are not admirable (see 160-278 n.) and occasionally he dealt with such in his poetry but in the main he consciously limited himself to "the best."

246-9. "We have no sympathy but what is propagated by pleasure: I would not be misunderstood; but wherever we sympathise with pain, it will be found that the sympathy is produced and carried on by subtle combinations with pleasure."<sup>10</sup> "What we are," see viii. 485-94.

250-6. Wordsworth was conscious of his mission; he proudly regarded himself as the priest of a new order in literature (see i. 52-4 n.). "Speaking of his own poems, Wordsworth said he principally valued them as being a *new power* in the literary world."<sup>11</sup> Note "boldly" (235), "no timid step" (250), "dared" (252) and see iii. 355 n.; vi. 32-3 n. Yet when these lines were written the *Lyrical Ballads* were the only poems of the kind here described that Wordsworth had published. In 254-60 he says that such poems will displease many readers, just as in the Preface to the *Ballads* he had declared, "I was well aware, that by those who should dislike them, they would be read with more than common dislike" (*Oxf. W.*, p. 934). The construction is, "to be heard by those . . . by men . . . [by] minds." Contrast 255-6 with 227-8. There is a suggestion of contrast between "letter" and "soul," between "outward" and "invisible."

256-75. Wordsworth distinguishes three classes: those who are adroit in speech but think as others think (256-60, in A there is no semicolon after "Accomplished"); those "who are their own upholders" and whose effectiveness of speech comes from "native passion" (261-5, presumably men of "humble and rustic life" whose language is commended in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*); and the contemplative of humble rank who are inarticulate (265-75). These last, who are likewise "their own upholders," are placed highest because of their insight into those truths which are deepest and hardest to express and because of Wordsworth's love for "the unassuming things that hold A silent station in this beauteous world" (46-7). Cf. the "overflow" from "Michael" given in Knight, VIII, 230.

267. See 128-33 n.

271-2. "Theirs is the language . . . power . . . silent joy" "of the heavens." As applied to language this may mean they look what they are, and think but do not speak it; so "image" may mean that in appearance they have something of the grandeur and simplicity of the heavens. The general sense seems to be that they convey without language a sense of nobility, power, and joy.

273. *under-agents*: See de S., 600.

276-8. The religious spirit of these lines, which (as they are in MS Y) cannot be later than 1804, is very different from the conventional and at times complacent piety of the comments added in later years. "Who feeds our hearts" is finely thought and said. Cf. 204-5.

279. *about this time*: Towards the end of the period of recovery described in lines 18-278, a period which lasted from the close of 1795 to the summer of 1797 (de S., 585-6).

281-5. In 227-8 Wordsworth explained that "the inner frame" is often good when the external man is rude. He now proceeds a step further and maintains that Nature may give dignity and nobility of appearance to men in the humblest walks of life. This is similar to viii. 256-89.

283. *conditions*: Social conditions (i. e. ranks), or conditions of life?

286. *Grandeur*: Wordsworth does not say "beauty" (as he did in "Three years she grew," where Nature promises that



"beauty born of murmuring sound Shall pass into her face") because he was more concerned with dignity, nobility, significance; and these, rather than what is usually termed "beauty," the "humblest face" may have. Cf. 80-1, 152, 156-7. According to Leslie Stephen, Book XIII "shows how Wordsworth reached his famous theory that the language of poetry should be indistinguishable from that of ordinary life. That is merely the literary translation of his social doctrine."<sup>12</sup>

287-90. "I felt that a man's actions, circumstances (surroundings, wealth, clothes) are significant—to the poet at least—chiefly for the emotions involved in them, either on the part of the man himself, or of the poet or other observer." Compare the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*: "Another circumstance must be mentioned which distinguishes these Poems from the popular Poetry of the day; it is this, that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling" (*Oxf. W.*, p. 935). See also ii. 245-61 n.; v. 595-605 n.

289. *to the pleasure of the mind*: So far as mental pleasure or, to be more specific, poetry is concerned. Wordsworth is here speaking not of economic, or social, or political values; he does not deny that the labors of a bank clerk may be of great importance to his family or those of a statesman to his country quite apart from the passion involved in them. "Mainly" is not in A.

✓ 290-94. That natural objects—earth, trees, streams—themselves have emotions which permeate natural occupations however humble—farming, for example,—and thus make them, because of these emotions, better subjects for poetry than artificial occupations. See xii. A 146-7 and de S., 599, note to A 369-79. Another instance of Wordsworth's animism, see Chapter v. The reading in Z, "works of man Engrafted on her objects," makes the meaning clear.

✓ 295-7. That the poet may find material for his art wherever Nature has led men, e. g., in the life of humble farmers upon whom Nature breathes grandeur and with whose daily tasks is mingled the passion of natural objects.

298. *By Nature's side*: This might mean that the poet has always followed the natural (that is, the spontaneous and

intuitive) rather than the artificial, or that he has been a co-worker with Nature, but more probably asserts that poets have always lived close to external nature.

300-12. "I came to hope also that these convictions as to the grandeur which Nature confers on the humblest men and as to the suitability for poetry of the every-day life of men engaged in lowly natural occupations might in my case constitute the peculiar faculty with which I believe every poet is endowed and by which he sees what no one has seen before. I hoped that I might write poetry which could not be learned from others but which, welling up from the depths within me, should, like a fountain or a river, become a power in the lives of men, a creative and enduring influence."

303-5. Cf. 358-60.

310. *a source of untaught things*: The imagination produces works which, unlike those imitative of other writers, are "creative" (311, cf. ii. 245-61 n.), and, since it is not quite the same in any two poets, it gives to each "his own peculiar faculty" (303). Wordsworth's conception of education was that we should not teach children things but should give them the opportunity to develop powers.

✓ 312-49. (This splendid passage, not so well known as it should be, reveals a gift that Wordsworth seldom exercised—a power of historical imagination and of picturing vividly scenes quite unlike anything he had ever beheld.) His lines to "The Monument commonly called Long Meg" are somewhat similar. For his interest in Druids, see iii. A 82-92 n. The connection of this episode with the earlier part of the book is twofold: (1) it led to the composition of part of a poem which embodied the principles there set forth; and (2) in the conception he formed of this poem Wordsworth felt that he exercised the faculty which, as he pointed out in 299-305, he believed to be distinctive of the true poet, that of seeing something in a way no one had seen it before. (Presumably he also felt that his vision of the Druids was a poet's vision. In consequence, he "experienced," as C. H. Herford has said, "an inrush of the faith, never so fully felt before, that he was one of the great company of Poets" (*Wordsworth*, 1930, p. 58). In the Fenwick note to *Guilt and Sorrow* he remarked: "My ramble over

many parts of Salisbury Plain . . . left upon my mind imaginative impressions the force of which I have felt to this day." It is characteristic of Wordsworth that, while his vision gave him confidence that he was a poet and apparently stimulated his creative powers, it was totally different from the drab, realistic tale which was conceived and in part executed at the time.) See vi. 91-2 n. Professor de Selincourt points out (*P. W.*, *Youth*, p. 336) that this passage is based on one in an early draft of *Guilt and Sorrow*, of which a fair copy, made in April or May, 1794, survives. In this account of a "swain . . . far astray" who sees the Druids, lines 20, 25, 27-9, 34, 39-41 of the variant of 185-98 (*ibid.*, 104) correspond to *Prelude*, xiii. 323, 330, 331-3, 345-6, 347-9. Of these lines, *Guilt and Sorrow* as published retains only "the giant wicker rear For sacrifice its throngs of living men" (122-3, cf. *Prelude*, xiii. 332-3).

312-20. Lines 312-14 if less pedestrian are more pretentious than A 312-14, but 315-20 are a great improvement over the early versions; 318-20 were added so late as 1832 or 1839. The interesting detail, "by the solitude overcome" (A 319), may have been omitted to avoid repeating "solitude" (317).

312. Like one of Nature's *works* (cf. "a work of his," 309). This line seems to be closely connected with 290-99. There is a suggestion of animism in "power"; cf. v. 218-21, xiv. 113 and see Chapter v.

314. *raised*: Although Wordsworth left the Isle of Wight "with melancholy forebodings" this word suggests that for a part at least of his three days on the trackless downs he was in an exalted mood. This frame of mind together with the satisfaction of beginning a poem of a new and significant type may account for the excellent spirits in which he reached Tintern Abbey.

322. Cf. the sonnet, "Hail, Twilight," 6, "the rude Briton, when, in wolf-skin vest."

A 327. *it*: Darkness; A 328 is parenthetical. "And it took, A," "come and" were wisely eliminated. On "darkness" see v. 598 n. and pp. 162, 424, 429, 483 above.

330, A 333-4, 336. Note the alliteration (see iii. 28 n.) in "Desert . . . dismal," "thrills Throughout," "wide waste." "Visible" and "dismal" are unpleasantly alike in sound.

333-49. A 333 is less vivid than 333; "when . . . on" (A 338-9), "Such . . . quarters" (A 341), all of A 344, and all but "dream" of A 348 are well lost; not so "a mystery of shapes" (A 340) and "With intricate profusion . . . The untill'd ground" (A 342-3); "I saw the" (A 349) and "seem'd . . . them" (A 352) are replaced by better readings; but the tame, almost monosyllabic "and the waste . . . sounds" (348-9), although better than A 352-3, is distinctly inferior to the A<sup>2</sup> variant, "strains that cheer'd The widely listening waste with still delight."

352. *monumental hints*: Stonehenge.

356-7. Cf. 144 n., 160-256, 368; xi. 142-4; *Peter Bell*, 133-4: "The common growth of mother-earth Suffices me"; but see v. 573-7 n.

✓ 358. The power of the imagination to transmute what appears to be commonplace is a *higher power* than that of picturing "things that may be . . . fancied in the obscurity of years." Cf. *Peter Bell*, 136-45, especially,

What nobler marvels than the mind  
May in life's daily prospect find,  
May find or there create,

and its dedication: "the Imagination . . . may be called forth as imperiously, and for kindred results of pleasure, by incidents . . . in the humblest departments of daily life."

✓ 368-78. ("About this time I seemed to see that everyday life might be so transfigured by the imagination as to become a new world, a world that deserved to be made known to men since it was based not on some accidental combination of circumstances, not upon the activity of a wilful and capricious fancy, but upon the immutable laws of that power which is the source of our spiritual dignity and the creator of this new world, the imagination.) These laws according to which the imagination grows and operates require for its development a balance and interchange of the action of external nature upon man and of man upon external nature. The blended might of these two actions results in a creative activity which is the supreme excellence of the external world and of man."<sup>13</sup>

✓ Wordsworth elsewhere defines the imagination as "processes

of creation or of composition, governed by certain fixed laws"  
and "proclaims"

How exquisitely the individual Mind  
(And the progressive powers perhaps no less  
Of the whole species) to the external World  
Is fitted:—and how exquisitely, too— . . .  
The external World is fitted to the Mind;  
And the creation (by no lower name  
Can it be called) which they with blended might  
Accomplish . . . <sup>14</sup>

It may be that these concluding lines of XIII were intended as a transition to XIV, the first half of which deals with the imagination. They have much in common with v. 595-605.<sup>15</sup>

368. Cf. 357.

369. *about this time: About August, 1793, when Wordsworth wandered over Salisbury Plain and composed part of Guilt and Sorrow. The date is important since it puts this incident and the development which followed closely upon it some three years earlier than the events and the state of mind described in the first three hundred lines of this book. Yet the two states of mind, the two points in Wordsworth's development, seem to be much the same: a realization of the nobility of the common man and of the nobility possible to poetry which deals with him and with humble, every-day life as it is transfigured by the imagination. The emphasis varies and there are additions and subtractions but the essential point is the same. Lines 366-72 declare that Wordsworth's own mind confirmed the truth of Coleridge's assertion, given in lines 352-60, which in turn is but a reassertion of the development traced in the first part of the book. (That is, Wordsworth presents two accounts of how he arrived at this momentous conviction: in 1795-7 by reflection and association with country folk; in 1793 as a result of a vision and of solitary meditation on Salisbury Plain. Presumably, both accounts are true; he had the vision but, as is commonly the case, it faded, was dimmed by other interests and by pre-occupation with analytical reason.) When this "strong disease" passed and he came slowly back to his true self he rediscovered, by observation of the humble folk about him and by reflection, what had been borne in upon him three*

years before. Even at the earlier period the idea could not have been entirely new to him since it is strikingly embodied in "The Female Vagrant," much of which was composed as early as 1791, and since Burns had taught his "youth" "How Verse may build a princely throne On humble truth."<sup>16</sup> That it did not, as the first part of the book would lead us to suppose, first come to him so late as 1797, on his recovery from despair, is also clear from the fact that "The Ruined Cottage" was begun in 1795. Presumably it was a slowly deepening conviction, the result in part of flashes of insight, in part of reflection, in part of gradual, half-unconscious growth. But it was not a final judgment. In 1799 he attempted an epic or romance (see i. 166-269 n.) and thereafter by no means limited his work to "the vulgar forms of present things"—*The Prelude* itself is not so limited. At the same time he never lost his belief in the value of reality and in the power of the imagination to transform into great poetry "incidents . . . in the humblest departments of daily life."<sup>17</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See 48-50 (where "love" is indeed mentioned) and 79-81.

<sup>2</sup> De S., notes to xii A 15-22, xiii A 47-52 (pp 591, 596).

<sup>3</sup> De S., Addenda, pp [608 A], [608 E]. See Chapter II.

<sup>4</sup> See A. O. Lovejoy, "'Nature' as Aesthetic Norm," *Modern Language Notes*, XLII (November, 1927), 444-50, and Appendix of *Primitivism in Antiquity* by A. O. Lovejoy and George Boas, Baltimore, 1935.

<sup>5</sup> *Biographia Literaria*, chapter xiv (ed Shawcross, II, 6). Walter Pater refers to "the peculiar function of Wordsworth's genius, as carrying in it a power to open out the soul of apparently little or familiar things" ("Wordsworth," *Appreciations*).

<sup>6</sup> *Oeuvres Complètes*, Paris, 1818, VI, 288.

<sup>7</sup> XX, 1765, p 322, quoted by E. N. Hooker in "The Reviewers and the New Criticism," *Philological Quarterly*, XIII (1934), 201

<sup>8</sup> *Anima Poetae*, ed E. H. Coleridge, 1895, p 51.

<sup>9</sup> "Wordsworth" in *Appreciations*.

<sup>10</sup> Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (*Oxf. W.*, p. 938).

<sup>11</sup> H. C. Robinson's Diary, May 31, 1812

<sup>12</sup> "Wordsworth's Youth," *Studies of a Biographer*, 1904, I, 259-60.

<sup>13</sup> "Wordsworth believes that the visionary ideal is consummated neither in Nature, nor in human experience of inward origin, but only in their 'blended might,' that is in concrete artistic creation" (A. E. Powell, *The Romantic Theory of Poetry*, 1926, p. 125). In his second essay on epitaphs Wordsworth criticizes Lyttleton's epitaph because "there is no interchange of action from within and from without" (Grosart, II, 53).

<sup>14</sup> Preface of 1815 (*Oxf. W.*, p. 955); *Recluse*, "Prospectus," 63-71; cf. Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (*Oxf. W.*, p. 938), "the Poet . . . considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other."

<sup>15</sup> This entire note owes much to the suggestions of one of my former students, Arthur Craver, of Miami University.

<sup>16</sup> Fenwick note to *Guilt and Sorrow*; "At the Grave of Burns," 34-6.

<sup>17</sup> Dedication of *Peter Bell* (1819).

## BOOK XIV (AXIII)

THE first half of XIV deals with the imagination and is thus closely connected with XII and XIII. But, whereas in those books Wordsworth tells how his imagination was impaired and how restored, in the present one he forsakes personal history to treat of the imagination in general. Accordingly, inasmuch as

This faculty hath been the feeding source  
Of our long labour, (193-4)

these first 231 lines not only complete XII and XIII but form a fitting conclusion to the philosophical part of the entire work. The second half of XIV constitutes a conclusion of the more usual sort and, aside from a statement of the poem's purpose and of omissions which have prevented the complete fulfillment of that purpose, is largely personal. The only biographical parts (348-69, 395-407, 415-24) summarize Wordsworth's life between his leaving France (1792-3) and his settling in Racedown (September, 1795, the point at which the poem opens), mention Calvert's bequest (January, 1795), the days at Alfoxden with Coleridge (1797-8), and the death of John Wordsworth (February, 1805), which darkens the concluding books.

As a whole, XIV was composed, along with XIII, during the first three weeks of May, 1805; but nearly half of it (lines corresponding to 1-150, 172-82, 348-69, 376-87) is of somewhat earlier date, all except 1-62 (which is still earlier) being written, in Professor de Selincourt's opinion, in March and the ten weeks preceding December 25, 1804.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Harper, who praises IX-XI, writes of this book:

The author has now formally set up as a teacher of safe philosophy. His tone is pietistic, his plan drearily systematic, his language abstruse. He sees not men and women so much as bundles of psychological traits . . . the fourteenth book is an anticlimax. The style is neither fresh and simple, as in some of the earlier parts, nor dignified and austere, as in many high places throughout the poem. It is a style he rarely, if ever, used before 1805, but only too often in later years. Pure, colourless intellectual terms loom . . . in almost every sentence. Of sensuous quality there is very little. The passion seems forced.



The diction is almost as far removed as possible from "the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation." That the boldness of Wordsworth's genius has vanished is shown even by so small a matter as the frequent recurrence of the cautious double negative, the use of which became one of his worst habits of composition—*e. g.*, "endowments not from me withheld," "no insufficient plea," "not unworthy of regard." The summary of the entire poem, as given in the fourteenth book, describes the stilling of a noble struggle. Somehow the poet's early solicitude for human welfare, the agonizing sympathy and the audacious hope, are set aside as evil; satisfaction with nature's balm and the established order of society replaces the old yearning, and is hailed as a moral conquest. (II, 150-1)

This is in the main just criticism although much of it is equally applicable to no small part of the preceding five books, particularly to the last three, which were written mainly after John Wordsworth's death.<sup>2</sup> Doubtless it was these limitations that Wordsworth had in mind when, shortly after completing the poem, he lamented that "it seemed to have a dead weight about it . . . being so far below what I seemed capable of executing."<sup>3</sup> But a discussion of the nature of the imagination is very different from a narrative of boyhood adventures and naturally leads to a different style and language. Largely a product of the analytical, conscious mind it inevitably proceeds on a lower plane than passages which embody the workings of the same faculty. Yet Wordsworth's handling of it constitutes a significant contribution to a subject of the greatest importance to literature, a contribution which only a poet could have made and which few poets could have made so well.

Professor de Selincourt remarks that owing to changes in the direction of orthodoxy "the last Book in particular, which is the philosophical conclusion of the whole matter, leaves a totally different impression from that created by the earlier text" (p. lxi). By this, however, he means not that the "philosophical conclusion" is impaired but that "our estimate of the authentic Wordsworth, the poet of the years 1798-1805" is "falsified." To the unsuspecting reader this is true, but to one who is aware of the pietistic nature of these changes they are annoying rather than seriously misleading. Yet neither they nor weaknesses such as Mr. Harper points out should blind us to the importance of the book for the understanding of *The*

*Prelude* as a whole and for the light it throws on Wordsworth's thought. Much as we may regret that it was not written before the death of the poet's brother and while the assistance of Coleridge's enthusiastic sympathy and philosophic insight<sup>4</sup> was still to be had, it yet contains one great passage, some splendid lines that were later omitted, and not a little that is admirably expressed.

1-62. The book opens, not like III, IV, and X with a brief picture, but something as VIII does, with a long description. Here, however, the description is of an incident in the poet's youth which is taken out of its chronological order to illustrate and introduce the subject of the first 231 lines, the nature of the imagination. In this respect the beginning of this book is unique.

We know of three excursions that Wordsworth made to Wales: in 1791, 1793, and 1824.<sup>5</sup> Although Professor de Selincourt declares (p. 599) that the experience here described took place on the second of these trips, I can discover no argument in favor of this opinion but several reasons for believing 1791 is the correct date. In the first place, the phrase "In one of these [those] excursions" would seem to indicate a different excursion from that of 1793, with which the preceding book concludes. Secondly, in MS W the passage begins "Once when a Youth" and Wordsworth would hardly speak of himself as a youth after his experiences in France and after the crisis brought on by England's declaration of war. Again, in MS W this incident marks the beginning of Book V, which was then to be the concluding book. Professor de Selincourt may be too rigorous when he declares, "This shorter *Prelude* would have taken his history no further than his first Long Vacation" (p. xxvi), yet it would be strange if the original plan included an experience many months later than the return from France and later than England's declaration of war. Then, too, Wordsworth's letter to Sir George Beaumont of September 20, 1824, implies that he had previously made but one trip to Bethkelet, from which he began the ascent of Snowdon (line 4); yet in the dedication of *Descriptive Sketches* (published before the second visit to Wales) he mentions among the places visited in 1791 Snowdon and "the quiet village of Bethkelet." Furthermore, the excur-

sion is ascribed to 1791 in the *Memoirs* (I, chapter VIII). Finally, *Descriptive Sketches*, part of which was written in 1791 and which was published in 1793 before the second trip to Wales, contains lines so close to A 43-4, A 56-9 that they must refer to the same experience and to the year 1791:

A mighty waste of *mist* the valley fills,  
 A solemn *sea*<sup>1</sup> whose vales and mountains round  
 Stand motionless, to awful *silence* bound.  
 A gulf of *gloomy blue*, that opens wide  
 And bottomless, divides the midway tide. . . .  
 Loud thro' that midway gulf ascending, sound  
 Unnumber'd *streams* with hollow *roar* profound.  
*Mounts* thro' the nearer mist the chaunt of birds.

(495-506)

I have italicized the more striking words that are common to the two descriptions but these would mean nothing were it not that each passage pictures a similar and most unusual scene: a mountain valley filled by a sea of mist in which appears a deep, gloomy chasm<sup>2</sup> of blue with the roar of innumerable streams mounting through it. Wordsworth may have been aware of the similarity for in revising the two passages he brought them still closer together: "Unnumber'd" in the one and "Inseparable" in the other (W text) both become "Innumerable"; in the later *Descriptive Sketches* the gulf is called a "chasm" (413), as in A 56, and is characterized as "dark" (415, cf. A 64) and, as is suggested throughout A 55-65, "mysterious" (415).

1-6. As the beginning of this book is abrupt and as the use of "those" instead of "the" in the first line is not clear,<sup>3</sup> it is hard to see why the pleasing opening found in MS W, "Once when a Youth . . .," was rejected unless it was to connect this book closely with XIII. Apparently Wordsworth assumed that the reader would have in mind his wanderings on Salisbury Plain and wished to say, "On a similar trip I once took in Wales. . . ." Furthermore, he closed the preceding book with an abstruse account of a certain creative power and, as the workings of this power were to be illustrated in the opening lines of XIV, it would seem that he wished to make the connection between the two books more obvious.

2-3. *through . . . Cambria ranging*: Both the words and their order are less natural than A's "travelling . . . Through Wales on foot."

3. *a youthful friend*: Here as in vi. 323, where Jones is referred to in the same phrase, the name is omitted presumably because it seemed a merely personal detail such as Wordsworth sought to avoid. See v. 195 n.

4. *Bethgelert*: "Bethkelert" in 1793 Preface to *Descriptive Sketches* and in A (see facsimile, de S., pp. xvi-xvii), "Beddgelert" in most recent books; it has been called "the most romantically placed village in Wales." "Couching-time," the time when the sheep "couch" or lie down.

6-15. The best of the several readings of 6-10 is perhaps that given on p. 600 including line 8 on p. 470, which went with it. Line 9 is worse and 11 is better in the final than the early texts; 14-15 represent a condensation of four wordy lines in A, which contain some vivid details. "Full of heart" (A 14) is better than "undiscouraged."

A 6-7. The facsimile given in de S. between pages xvi and xvii shows six versions of these lines in MS A. Of these Professor de Selincourt, who adds a seventh (ii on p. 600) presumably from another page of the manuscript, prints but three, omitting some minor changes in these. The differences, negligible in themselves, make clear that the development of the text of *The Prelude* was even more complicated than the numerous printed variants indicate. Other complications would be revealed if we had all the original drafts instead of, as is the case with most of the poem, only fair copies of the early texts. Furthermore, when a piece of paper bearing a later reading has been stuck over part of the manuscript we do not have the version underneath. An unimportant unrecorded variant of 274, which has been crossed out, will be found in the reproduction facing p. 607. See also ii. A 181-3, B<sup>3</sup> variant, n.; xi. 331-4 n.

12. *glaring*: A strange epithet to apply to a night on which the moon was invisible. Cf. "a thin veil of glittering haze" ("A narrow girdle of rough stones," 45), "hot gleamy days in which all distant objects are veiled in a species of bright obscurity" (letter to Dorothy, 6 September, 1790).

17. Although "pensively" adds nothing to the sense, Wordsworth preferred it to the inexactness and S alliteration (cf. A 49 and iii. 28 n.) of "silently . . . sank."

22-3. More vivid than A 23-4. "Lurcher," "a cross-bred dog, properly between the sheep-dog or collie and the greyhound" (NED), is a marked improvement over "Cur did."

24. "Coiled-up prey" is vivid but does not compensate for the loss of A 25.

25-39. This rather commonplace passage contributes, as an unimpressive foreground may, to the grandeur of the scene that lies beyond. Lines 27, 36-7, 39 are prose and 36-7 poor prose; yet the really fine bit, "in that half dream which wrapp'd me up" (W variant of A 36-40) was early dropped.

✓ 40-62. Not only the excellence of these lines but their mystery and imaginative suggestiveness connect them with other passages describing the poet's early life that were written during or shortly after his return from Germany. For these reasons and because 1-65 appear in W as a fair copy in a different handwriting from the rest of the manuscript, they may well belong to the early period when the best parts of *The Prelude* were composed. The comment that follows recalls the interpretation added later to the account of meeting with the discharged soldier, of finding the drowned man's body, and to the "spots of time" incidents.) The scene here described has much in common with that pictured in *Excursion*, ii. 829-74 and with one that De Quincey beheld on a summer afternoon in the lakes:

The effects arose from the position of the sun and of the spectator, taken in connection with a pendulous mass of vapor, in which, however, were many rents and openings, and through them, far below, at an abyss-like depth, was seen the gloomy valley, its rare cottages, and 'unrejoicing' fir-trees. I had beheld the scene many times before; I was familiar with its least important features, but now it was absolutely transfigured; it was seen under lights and mighty shadows, that made it no less marvellous to the eye than that memorable creation amongst the clouds and azure sky, which is described by the Solitary in 'The Excursion.' And, upon speaking of it to Wordsworth, I found that he had repeatedly witnessed the same impressive transfiguration.<sup>8</sup>

It is not surprising that, except for the omission of A 63-4,

the passage is better throughout in the latest version; since the earlier texts, though often superior in freshness, naturalness, and frankness, are likely to have wordy, pedestrian, awkward lines and to be less successful in the lofty, Miltonic style that is here employed. One may have doubts as to "firmament Of azure" (40-1) and "ethereal vault" (50), but 40-2 is a great improvement over A 41-4 just as 47 is over A 49—a flat enough line even without the "Sea . . . Sea . . . seem'd" alliteration (cf. A 18 and iii. 28 n.). "Meek and silent" of A 44 is skilfully transferred to 56. As compared with 50-7, A 52-6 is bald prose. The A<sup>3</sup> variant of A 51-6 has one fine line that was later omitted, "In plenitude of solitary state."

A 43-4, A 56-9. For the similarity of these lines to *Descriptive Sketches* (1793), 495-506 see end of note to 1-62.

48-51. The mist spread out over much of the ocean but did not conceal (encroach upon) the heavens.

(A 56-65. In the final text much less emphasis is laid on the chasm, which is there made, along with the mist, the moon, and the roar of waters, one of four elements of equal importance. A 60-5, which stressed it as "the Soul, the Imagination of the whole," is omitted and the peculiar color is no longer mentioned.) Undoubtedly the original impression is more nearly reproduced in the earlier texts than in the one written in 1832 or 1839—it is significant that the blue chasm through which the roar of waters mounted was described in *Descriptive Sketches* (written between 1791 and 1793). Yet it seems likely that the final version represents not a falsification of the original idea but a simplification of it or a correction in the interest of clarity. (Wordsworth may have realized that most persons would have difficulty in understanding how "the Imagination of the whole" was lodged in the chasm and that the "image of a mighty Mind" and the illustration of the "manner in which Nature works . . . As if with an imaginative power" would be just as true and much more clear if applied to the entire "vision." In fact it may have seemed to him more true. In particular he may have felt that there were aspects of a mighty mind (which is not mentioned in the earliest text) which were imaged in parts of the scene other than the chasm. Certainly the fragment which Professor de Selincourt prints on page 600 (63-76 n.) is not applicable to the chasm.

57-8. Would it not be better if 58 preceded 57?

57. *Not distant*: An interesting illustration of Wordsworth's elimination of matter-of-fact details (see p. 13 above). He wrote three versions of this line (W, A, A<sup>2</sup>—this last on p. 473) before he realized that it did not matter how far the chasm was from his feet.

61-2. "Felt (. . . hour)" in the E<sup>2</sup> variant is more moving.

64. Animism (see Chapter v). "Spirits" is capitalized in D<sup>2</sup> and E.

66-99. In both A and the final text two things are illustrated: a mighty mind and more especially one function of such a mind, the imagination. Of the first of these nothing is said in W, the earliest manuscript. The moonlight vision impressed him as a fit symbol of a mighty mind because of its grandeur, its vastness or scope, its suggestions of infinity and power, its brooding over the dark, the mysterious, and the vast.<sup>9</sup> The fragment printed in the de S. note to [63-76] seems to mean that such a mind reaches out through the mental world as the vision from Snowdon had spread out over the physical, and that its depth, its height, its breadth were typified in the extent of the scene in all directions and its union of active thought with receptive sensitivity was imaged in the fellowship of the silent moonlight with the oracular voices issuing from the dark chasm. Here again we have the principle of the reconciliation of opposites (xiii. 1-10 n.) and darkness used as a symbol or source of wisdom or power.<sup>10</sup>

In A, where the gulph rather than the scene as a whole was taken as the "image of a mighty Mind," Wordsworth's thought appears to have been that the mighty mind sees as if through a fissure deep into the abyss of being (cf. "the mind's abyss," vi. 594, "the soul's deep valley," "Yarrow Revisited," 39); that it does this not so much by conscious, intellectual effort as by brooding over "whatsoe'er is dim Or vast in its own being" (A 72-3), as the mist and its rift appeared to brood over the earth, listening for intimations of infinity and God; that it is exalted by an undersense of the divine and the mysterious, as the chasm received grandeur and significance from the homeless voice of waters; and that it transforms sense impressions and invests them with a glory not their own, just as the rift in the vapour had done to the roar of waters mounting through it.

In the final text Wordsworth goes on to say (74-7) that such a mind is sustained by the evidences it finds in both the physical and spiritual worlds of transcendental power. In the world of the senses this power leads the majestic intellect to conceive ideal form; in the spiritual it brings conviction of immortality. These last-mentioned aspects of the mighty mind are perhaps imaged in the grandeur and unearthly beauty of the scene.

In 78 (A 73)<sup>11</sup> Wordsworth turns to the second thing symbolized by the vision,—the workings of the imagination. The scene he had beheld from Snowdon possessed a unity such that, although different elements could be distinguished, they could not be separated from one another. The moonlight, for example, pervaded all so that the mist was seen only as it was glorified by a soft, strange light. Similarly the chasm was nothing in itself—one could not think of it apart from the surrounding sea of mist, the magic from overhead, and the sound of waters that rose through it—yet it impressed itself on all (A 81-2) and without it the scene would have lacked its strangest, most thrilling element, “the Soul . . . of the whole.” (This unity and “interchangeable supremacy”<sup>12</sup> picture to the senses, “’mid circumstances [so] awful and sublime . . . That men, least sensitive, see” it (cf. de S., 602 lines 54-6), the transforming power exerted on the entire universe by higher minds. Such power is creative (see ii. 245-61 n.). Coleridge spoke of it as “what Bacon calls the *vestigia communia* of the senses, the latency of all in each . . . the excitement of vision by sound” and as “the power of reducing multitude into unity of effect, and modifying a series of thoughts by some one predominant thought or feeling.”<sup>13</sup> Wordsworth wrote Landor, January 21, 1824: “Even in poetry it is the imaginative only, viz., that which . . . turns upon infinity, that powerfully affects me . . . passages where things are lost in each other, and limits vanish, and aspirations are raised.” See Chapter x.

The changes made in revising this passage are very numerous but, aside from the instances already mentioned, are merely verbal. Nearly all are improvements,—the earlier form of 63-89 is at times wordy and flat. Lines 67-70a are not in A nor are A 71-3a, A 80-2, A 87b-9a in the final text. “Shadowed” (79) is better in sound as well as meaning than “Exhibited”



(A 75); "Thrusts forth" (A 86)<sup>14</sup> is, however, superior to "exhibits" (88); "Like transformations" (A 94) was changed into the stuffy "Kindred mutations" presumably because of "like" in the following line and in 98. The change from "Which" to "That" (90) was unfortunate in view of the "that" introduced into the preceding line.

67. *majestic intellect*: May have been substituted for "mighty Mind" (A 69) because "mind" was to be used in 70, or to avoid the "mi"—alliteration (see iii. 28 n.), or for the sake of a more pleasing rhythm.

71. *infinity*: See pp. 4-5, 239-45 above; "whatsoe'er is dim Or vast in its own being" (A 72-3) expressed much the same idea; see Wordsworth's letter to Landor quoted just above. "Broods," cf. A 165.

A 71. "Under-sense" (vii. 735) and "under-agents" (xiii. 273) might be added to the de S. note. Cf. also xii. 279-80 and n. "Exalted by an underpresence" is not happy.

76. *ideal form*: Cf. v. 457, vii. 480, "No mortal object," 5-8 (translated from Michael Angelo,—"the Soul . . . soars to seek . . . Ideal Form, the universal mould").

78-86. Cf. xii. 134-9 n. For "frames" (A<sup>2</sup> variant of A 79-83) see 450 and viii. 481 n.

A 81-2. See the quotation from Wordsworth's letter to Lady Beaumont of May 21, 1807, cited above p. 261, n. 37.

86-231. The course of thought is by no means obvious. Lines 86-111, which present no difficulty, describe the powers of the imagination; 112-29 enumerate the blessings enjoyed by the "higher minds," who possess this faculty, blessings which are summed up in 131 as "freedom in himself." An interpretation of the passage will be found on pp. 232-7 above. Wordsworth is here thinking, not of the vivid imagination of the child nor of the wayward imagination of the mentally erratic and of evil men of genius, but of the loftiest manifestations of the faculty in higher minds, where it is inseparable from spiritual love and "Reason in her most exalted mood."

✓ 94-7, 103-4. These lines seem to refer to the two-fold powers of the imagination: (1) the power to *perceive* the abiding in the flux, the significant in the apparently commonplace, the world in a grain of sand; (2) the power to *create*, to image

truths, to embody universal ideas or abstractions in individual forms. Both powers are active whereas the term "creative sensibility" (ii. 360) includes the creative power of the imagination but in place of the perceptive has the passive sensitivity to sense impressions, which is independent of the imagination.

94-6. One would naturally take "create" and "catch" as infinitives dependent upon "can" (93) and conclude that "are" is a mistake for "be," but all may be finite verbs. On "create" see ii. 245-61 n.

(95. De S., 600-5. Esthetically this is the most valuable of the passages printed for the first time by Professor de Selincourt. It is strange that a poet who gave the public much negligible verse should have overlooked these lines, particularly 7-21, 77, 86-8, 93-8, 102-4, 109-10, 114, which anyone might be glad to have written. They are obviously not a first draft and may be a year or more earlier than February-March, 1804, the date of manuscript W. In the first illustration, which furnishes another example of Wordsworth's enjoyment of bad weather (i. 416-18 n.), the rainbow unifies the scene—"pulls it together" as painters say—and by its unexpectedness ("abrupt and unhabitual influence") impresses itself upon all other objects and pervades them (A 80-2) "as if with an imaginative power" (de S., 600, footnote). It also illustrates Coleridge's doctrine that the imagination "reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities."<sup>15</sup> In the second picture, the horse in the moonlight,—which recalls the shepherd seen through fog or against the sunset (viii. 262-75, A 81-101)—the effect produced is similar to that wrought by "the creative or abstracting virtue of the imagination,"<sup>16</sup> that is, its capacity to eliminate whatever is extraneous or unessential to its purpose: "breath, motion gone, Hairs, colour, all but shape and substance gone." Then follows the only new idea in these pages, that Nature and man often work together to produce effects similar to those wrought by the imagination. Such effects, we are told, are "more imperious" than those previously described since man adds new grandeur to what Nature achieves without his aid (51-3). In the account of Sir Humphrey Gilbert's death that follows there is some similarity to the rainbow incident: the contrast between the

calm explorer with his open book (an every-day sight) and the fury of the storm about him exemplifies how "by abrupt and unhabitual influence" one object, the reading man, may "impress itself Upon all others" (A 80-2). Lines 86-8a may illustrate the abstracting virtue of the imagination and its power to "build up greatest things From least suggestions" (xiv. 101-2); but Dampier's adventures, although they appeal strongly to the imagination, do not image its workings or illustrate any of its various functions as pointed out in 77-84. This fact and the difficulty of making clear how man gives new grandeur to nature's ministry and how each of the preceding incidents illustrates the way in which the imagination works may have led to the rejection of the entire passage, admirable as are many of its lines. It is possible also that Wordsworth preferred not to associate the imagination with the strange and remote, as he had done in these instances.

For Wordsworth's enjoyment of the literature of travel and exploration see iii. 433-44 n.; for his fondness for the rainbow (24-30) see de S., 553, footnote to lines 29-30; for his interest in Mungo Park (79-88) see his letters to Scott of August 18 and November 10, 1806. "Amphibious" (45), as is explained in the two following lines, means "combining two classes, ranks, offices, qualities, etc." (NED). Lines 48-9a and 54b-5 are similar to xiv. A 85b-6a and xiv. A 83. "Such power" (57, cf. 88), "Such presence" (60), and "Such object" (65) refer to the imagination. As to "presence" see above, pp. 74-5, 344. In view of 76 and the quotation marks in 77, the liberty Wordsworth takes with "the language of the Chronicle" is interesting.

96-7. *or . . . mastery*: This excellent, admirably phrased idea is not in A, which has the inadequate "catch it by an instinct." Such men are usually responsive to the imaginative work of others.

98-9. A much less objectionable form of these lines is to be found in A<sup>2</sup> and B<sup>2</sup>. For "intellectual" in this A<sup>2</sup> B<sup>2</sup> variant see 168-202 n. and xii. 45 n.

✓100-2. The majestic intellect receives spiritual nourishment not only from the great and permanent but from little, transitory things in nature and in daily life, and from these little

things its creative power—as the most notable passages in *The Prelude* show—can build up greatest; cf. xii. 208-335; xiii. 144 n., 350-78. In vii. 731-6, really a description of the imaginative person, we read that London is not “an unmanageable sight . . . to him . . . who hath among least things An under-sense of greatest.” In an earlier form of the present passage (de S., 524) 100-1 are preceded by a variant of 106-8 and by lines asserting that such persons “catch the partial qualities of things”—which may mean the less obvious or the evanescent.

103. “Work” corresponds to “create” (94), “be wrought upon” to “caught By its . . . mastery” (96-7).

104-5. Cf. de S., 524, lines x-xiii of second quotation; de S., 556, lines 120-2, and ii. 260-5. “Of life” is emphatic, contrast “of death” (160); cf. 157-62 and see pp. 234-5 above.

✓106. Cf. 100-2 n.; ii. 245-61 n., 358-74; vi. 736-8. The fragmentary passage in MS W which is similar to this (de S., 524) has “By objects of the senses not enslaved.” Cf. Blake’s comment on Wordsworth’s “Influence of Natural Objects,” “Natural objects always did & now do weaken, deaden & obliterate Imagination in me,” and the conclusion of his “Vision of the Last Judgment,” “I do not behold the outward Creation . . . to me it is hindrance & not Action. . . . I question not my Corporeal or Vegetative Eye any more than I would Question a Window concerning a Sight. I look thro’ it & not with it.”<sup>17</sup> Coleridge said that Wordsworth planned in *The Prelude* “to treat man as man,—a subject of eye, ear, touch, and taste, in contact with external nature, and informing the senses from the mind, and not compounding a mind out of the senses.”<sup>18</sup>

107. *their*: The impulse of “sensible impressions.”

109-11. A late addition.

112. Since all minds are “from the Deity,” Wordsworth must mean that creative minds partake of what is the very essence of the divine nature. As Shelley wrote, “It [poetry] creates anew the universe, after it has been annihilated in our minds by the recurrence of impressions blunted by reiteration. It justifies the bold and true word of Tasso: *Non merita nome di creatore, se non Iddio ed il Poeta.*”<sup>19</sup>

113. *Powers*: In Wordsworth this term, particularly when it is capitalized, if it does not refer to angels, personified virtues,

or to monarchies, usually has a suggestion of animism (see pp. 73-6, 384-5 above). See, for example, i. 152; v. 218; viii. 165, 218, 258; xii. 98; xiii. 312; *Excursion*, iii. 842-6; "Remembrance of Collins," 24; *Descriptive Sketches*, 508-11; "Wishing-Gate," 2; "Presentiments," 19; "Devotional Incitements," 1-2; "Power of Sound," 171; "Oh what a Wreck," 2-3; "Kilchurn Castle," 6-9; "Enough of garlands," 13-14; "Fancy and Tradition," 8; *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, i. ii. 3; "Bold words affirmed," 12-14; "Expostulation and Reply," 21; "Floating Island," 1; "Toussaint L'Ouverture," 10; "Departure of Scott," 4. On Wordsworth's craving for power see viii. 597-607 n.

114-16. The awkward wording of this passage together with the editors' unfortunate addition of a comma after "are" may lead the reader to think that Wordsworth means "the consciousness of *who* they are" instead of "the consciousness of the Spirit by Whom they are infused through their every thought,"—that is, the consciousness of the habitual, permeating presence of the Deity. This is "the highest bliss That flesh can know." Wordsworth is here probably speaking of his own experience, for the greatest joy he mentions in *The Prelude* as coming to him is in the description of the time when "with bliss ineffable I felt the sentiment of Being spread O'er all" (ii. 400-2). Much the same thing is said in viii. A 830-5: the highest joy is the sense of union with all mankind and of communion with God, who pervades all.

117-18. Hardly an improvement over A 111.

120. "This distinction is that, well-known in philosophy, between the discursive or logical reason, by which the mind argues from one fact or hypothesis to another, and the intuitive reason, by which the mind perceives axioms and first-principles," Nowell Smith.

A 114. *sovereignty within*: Perhaps omitted because it implied self-sufficiency rather than dependence on the Deity or because "freedom in himself" (131, A 121) says much the same thing and, as Wordsworth wished in the latter phrase to summarize all the qualities mentioned in 112-29, he could not include "sovereignty within" as one of these qualities. See 86-231 n. "Peace" is transferred to 126 and A 117 [121] takes the place of A 114.

121-3. Cf. "Ode to Duty," 10-14, 17-20.

124-9. Unfortunately substituted for A 114, A 118-19, which express a very different idea. "Repose," for example, if it arises from stagnation or the closing of one's mind is not "truth." "Delight . . . in the external universe" disappears entirely, presumably because Wordsworth came to know that such delight does fail (see 293-6n.). Lines 128b-130 are monosyllabic.

131. *freedom in himself*: Hyphens between these words would make clearer that "in himself" modifies "freedom" not "preserved." The phrase means the same thing as "sovereignty within" (A 114).

133-40. Except for "solitudes" and "I received" (139-40) nothing in these lines is in W or A. As to 134 see vi. 505 n.

139-41. Wordsworth here speaks of himself as a priest of Nature, within whose temple he had received, as a neophyte, his earliest visitations from the goddess. The idea is but vaguely suggested in A. For his priestly conception of his office as a poet, see i. 52-4 n.; for "solitudes" see Chapter iv. With 139 cf. *Paradise Lost*, vii. 27-8 (which may have influenced iii. 288), "In darkness, and with dangers compassed round, And solitude." Wordsworth means that he is now, at the time of writing, "compassed round by . . . solitudes."

141. *visitations*: Cf. xii. 203 and the impression made by a memorable sunrise on the Wanderer (*Excursion*, i. 211-12): "In such access of mind, in such high hour Of visitation from the living God."

142. *and which*: See iii. A 584 n.

144-6. Substituted for 127; both might well have been omitted together with the self-justification of 147-54.

A 128. *Witness*: Repeated from A 123.

147-9. *falls*: A substantive; the figure seems to be that of Fortune's wheel.

150-3. Clearer than A 131-4 but still confused: "Neither in my search for the right nor in my attitude towards public questions did I err through selfishness." Cf. *Excursion*, iv. 1018-21:

Ah! let not aught amiss within dispose  
A noble mind to practise on herself,  
And tempt opinion to support the wrongs  
Of passion.

151-71. These closely-knit and important lines, which constitute one of the better passages in the book, are not in W, the earliest manuscript. Possibly they were torn out. The differences between the A text and that of 1850 are all, except perhaps the omission of "The falsest of all worlds" (A 142), in favor of the latter. "Never did I . . . Tamper" (150-1) is pleasanter than "I never . . . Did tamper"; "conscience" (151) and "any public hope" (152) are clearer than "myself" and "any of my hopes"; the third "did" (A 136) and the unnecessary "I mean Oppress it by the laws" (A 139-40) are eliminated together with the vigorous, perhaps too vigorous, "The falsest of all worlds" (A 142); "growing weight" (159) and "moves with light and life informed, Actual" (161-2) are excellent additions; while "By . . . by" (168-9) is briefer, truer, and more euphonious than "By . . . from" (A 149-51). The omission of "all truth and beauty" is not another instance of the suppression or distortion of early expressions which to the pious, later Wordsworth appeared too liberal, but (it seems to me) the correction of an assertion which was likely to be misunderstood. When he wrote the lines he overlooked scientific truth and abstract beauty and meant that without the higher love which is inseparable from the imagination there can be no apprehension of truth as it relates to conduct (that is, no real understanding of life) or of beauty in man or in external nature.

154. Are there many who "yield Wilfully [i. e. intentionally] to mean cares or low pursuits"?

156. From connecting himself with any deadening care or pursuit (154).

157-62. In these important lines Wordsworth is directing attention to an idea very different from that expressed in the phrase "By sensible impressions not enthralled" (106), one that, although it meant much to him and is suggested or implied in many of his poems, is not brought out explicitly elsewhere in his published work. He developed this idea at length in the Y variant of viii. A 159-72 (de S., 553-8) but suppressed the passage without even revising it. Concerning "the tendency . . . Of use and custom to bow down the soul" he often speaks,<sup>20</sup> but this is obvious enough; the lines 160-2a contain the im-

portant part of his idea. This is that the cares and occupations of daily life render us indifferent to nature and lead us to think of the universe not as it really is, instinct with life and permeated by Being, by the Divine,<sup>21</sup> but as mere matter, a world that, apart from man and animal and vegetable life, is dead.<sup>22</sup> He goes on to say that the higher love and the ministry of fear counteract this tendency and that the higher love cannot exist without imagination—which brings him back to the theme of Book XIV. He might have proceeded more directly by saying that it is the imagination which shows us the universe not as dead but as informed with light and life, had he not wished to bring in intellectual love and affirm its close connection with the imagination. See 104-5 n.

162-9. "Fear" (on which see Chapter III), "sublime . . . forms," "pain," and "grandeur" are closely connected, as are "love," "beautiful forms," and "joy." The passage recalls de S., 553-9, where "grandeur," "love," and "fear" are also mentioned (lines 2, 3, 52). With 163 compare "Perfect love casteth out fear" (1 *John*, iv. 18). On 166 see xiii. 1-10 n.

168-202. Sir Walter Raleigh apparently had 168-70 in mind when he wrote that to Wordsworth, "All lasting grandeur in things perceived is a quality with which they are invested by the powers of the soul, by love, and by imagination."<sup>23</sup> But Wordsworth is here speaking not of things perceived but of the human spirit and his point is the very old and simple one that its greatness lies not in the achievements of the intellect, not in the conquest of matter, not in moral conduct, but in love. "Life," he insisted, ". . . is energy of love."<sup>24</sup>

Vain is the glory of the sky,  
The beauty vain of field and grove,  
Unless, while with admiring eye  
We gaze, we also learn to love. ("Glad sight," 5-8)

"Pervading" means much the same thing as "diffusive" in A 163, a love that is not limited to a single person or a small group but that reaches out to include all. Since, however, one adjective hardly makes this conception sufficiently clear he mentions three kinds of love: the "mild" (which the lamb feels for its mother), the "passionate" or "human" (which a man



feels for a maid), and the "higher" or "more intellectual."<sup>25</sup> It is of the third of these, without which "we are as dust," that he is speaking in 168-70, a love "pervading" or "diffusive" and "divine," which is characterized by awe<sup>26</sup> and which "proceeds More from the brooding Soul" (A 164-5, cf. 71-2). This last point is important since it indicates that such love is not instinctive but arises from meditation and may therefore (as well as because it is not physical) be termed "intellectual" (note "mind," 191, "Reason," 192). This intellectual or spiritual<sup>27</sup> love, which Wordsworth later terms "feeling intellect" (226), cannot, he twice assures us (188-9, 206-9), exist apart from the imagination.<sup>28</sup> Why this is he does not say. Indeed the lines that follow throw little light on the subject although they affirm that from one point of view it is the theme of the poem. Lines 190-2 are panegyric rather than explanation and are too vague to be of much help. Yet it may be surmised that, as most of the objects of "pervading love" are not present to the eye or well known, it is the imagination that makes them live for us. It is through the imagination that we come to understand things and ways of life to which we are not accustomed and persons who are unlike ourselves and whose attitudes and opinions are even opposed to our own. Such an understanding makes love possible just as love quickens the imagination and removes obstacles from its path. As Shelley wrote:

The great secret of morals is love; or a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own. A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination. . . . There is no want of knowledge respecting what is wisest and best in morals, government. . . . But we . . . want the creative faculty to imagine that which we know; we want the generous impulse to act that which we imagine.<sup>29</sup>

"Absolute power [of mind]" recalls "intellectual power" of xii. 45; "amplitude of mind" has affinities with "pervading love" (169) and "diffusive sentiment" (A 163); for "Reason in her most exalted mood" see pp. 232-7 above and also iv.

A 296 n. The figure of the stream is well carried out, from "feeding source" (193, an improvement on A 171), "blind cavern," and "natal murmur" (196, clearer but more studied than "The sound of waters," A 175), to the reflections from the placid breast of the river (201). "Ways of Nature" (198) is contrasted with "works of man" (202).

✓169. *grandeur*: Cf. i. 414; vi. 746-9; vii. 475-80, 748-9; viii. 362-4; xiii. 152-6, 283-7; de S., 553, line 2; *Recluse*, "Prospectus," 10-14; *Excursion*, iv. 957-64; vi. 666 ("The native grandeur of the human soul"). Wordsworth's emphasis on the grandeur of nature and of the human spirit is of a piece with the importance he attached to the native dignity of man, see iv. A 297-8 n.

✓179-87. The reviewer of Professor de Selincourt's edition of *The Prelude* in the *Times Literary Supplement* (April 29, 1926) compared the A text of this passage with that of 1850 and concluded that the latter, "the studied pietism of it notwithstanding, is better verse and truer poetry." "Most persons," he added, "will prefer a Christian Platonism to a prosy one." The early reading is certainly prosy and the later finished and euphonious; yet the choice of this passage to illustrate the superiority of the final text was not happy. (For, in the first place, the 1850 reading misrepresents Wordsworth's thought on an important point by giving the impression that God is the object of the higher love, whereas the earlier texts, continuing and clarifying the idea expressed in 162-70, refer to a more diffusive sentiment directed towards mankind, and perhaps nature and the universe in general, one into which the consciousness of the Deity enters dimly if at all.) Furthermore, like most changes of this kind in *The Prelude*, it is from the religious standpoint ineffectual if not positively offensive. Contrast xiii. 275b-8. It does not impress us, as do the poems of George Herbert, as the sincere utterance of a deeply religious nature; it suggests a professional ecclesiastic, not Jesus of Nazareth. And of what avail is "studied pietism"?

De S., 606. This passage, fairly obvious in thought and undistinguished in expression, was omitted when Wordsworth put into XII the lines that originally followed it and decided to pass immediately from intellectual love to the imagination. He

may have had the harrassed life of Coleridge in mind when he wrote the lines (compare 10 with "My genial spirits fail" of "Dejection," 39) but it is likely that he was thinking chiefly of his own growing family crowded into a little cottage, of his poverty, and of the illnesses and cares that tended to chain his mind to his domestic circle. These things may have played a larger part than has been recognized in the decline of his creative powers; at any rate they made the writing of lofty poetry and the devotion to other large interests difficult, especially in the absence of Coleridge. Line 7 shows keen observation. With 2-5 compare xiv 153-9; with 11 compare xii. A 185. In W this passage is followed by a similar one corresponding to xii. A 176-85. Since Wordsworth is speaking only of the higher love, 12-14 must refer not to lust but to ambition (15) and the like.

203-5. It is not immediately clear in what part of *The Prelude* ("lastly," 203, implies in the later books) Wordsworth has drawn from the progress of the imagination "the feeling of life endless" (A 183). Since this phrase is in A the reference cannot be to 77 or to 109-11, which are not in A; nor can it well be to A 111, which is not in the final text; and A 101-5 can hardly be stretched to mean "the feeling of life endless." As for preceding books, I recall nothing in them that connects the imagination with immortality. What seems most likely is that Wordsworth had in mind the entire passage (63-135) which interprets the vision from Snowdon. To be sure, "life endless" is not mentioned there but neither is it, except in the title, in the Immortality Ode, and one may argue that minds which are Powers, which feed upon infinity, and are conscious of being habitually infused by the Deity, that such minds cannot die. It should be observed that in both early and late versions "Infinity ["Eternity," 1850] and God" together constitute one idea<sup>30</sup> and that this idea, "the great thought By which we live," appears to be the same as "the feeling of [or, "faith in"] life endless." That is, to Wordsworth "life endless," "Infinity," and "God" were, not indeed the same, but inseparable; belief in one implied belief in the other two. It is only through the imagination that one feeds upon infinity, and he may have felt that this faculty had an important part in the apprehension by mighty minds of immortality and God.

But Wordsworth says that the feeling of [faith in] life endless has been drawn not from the imagination but from its "progress." Now in view of his repeated emphasis on childhood as the chief period of imaginative activity, Wordsworth should have believed that the imagination does not itself progress although (since the adult has more experience and knowledge, deeper affections, and better reasoning powers) the results of the adult's imaginative activity show marked gains. Wordsworth may have meant this last, especially if he was thinking (as in 89b-123) not so much of the imagination as of mighty minds, who, of course, *do* progress. He may have thought that the growth of the individual in spiritual power by the aid of the imagination implies the existence of God and "endless occupation for the Soul" (119), or immortality; and he may have felt that he had "drawn" this feeling or faith throughout lines 63-129, but presumably he had particularly in mind A 68-73a, in which he had described the mighty Mind as "one that feeds upon infinity, That is exalted by . . . The sense of God." Since this conception was none too clearly expressed he later enlarged on it and made it more definite, suggesting in 74-7 of the final text that the mighty mind is sustained by the consciousness of God and of immortality.

204. *Faith*: Although the change from "feeling" (A 183, see de S. n.) is in accord with the change in Wordsworth's attitude towards religion, what is "drawn" in *The Prelude* from the progress of the imagination can hardly be a "feeling of life endless," such as the little cottage girl of "We are Seven" had, but must be a belief. A decade before he completed the A text Wordsworth had learned through what he suffered in connection with Annette and with the French Revolution that "natural human feelings" have severe limitations as "the guide to truth." His confidence in the supreme value of the instincts, sense-perceptions, and affections weakened as his spiritual courage ebbed and his insight grew dim, but is there any evidence that it was renounced?)

209-18. Cf. xii. 276-7; *Recluse*, I. i. 686-8—

Possessions have I that are solely mine,  
Something within which yet is shared by none,  
Not even the nearest to me and most dear;

and *Biographia Literaria*, chapter xv (ed. Shawcross, II, 14), "a gift of imagination . . . may be cultivated and improved, but can never be learned." Cf. vii. 737-9a (of the imagination).

225-31. These lines furnish a transition between the preceding paragraphs and the one which follows. Note the repetition of "tenderness" (227, 234) and "tender" (228, A 218) and the similarity between 227-31 and 234-5, 253-6. The truth of the passage is open to question. In Wordsworth's case, "feeling intellect" was developed by contact with the French Revolution in 1791-2, "humbler tenderness" by association with Dorothy in 1796-7.

226. *feeling intellect*: Cf. A 166, 207, 168-202 n.

230. *humble cares*: Better than "little loves" (A 209) although "humbler" has already been used in 227. The repetition suggests that Wordsworth was thinking of his own presumption during his rationalistic period (xii. 109 n.) and of the pride into which the intellect when not guided by feeling is prone to fall.

232-66. A 338-42 should be added to the references on de S., 535. See also 277 n. and viii. A 841-2 n. Note the contrast between "early" and "later"; it is the later indebtedness, that of the years 1795-8, that is here referred to.

240-2. Much better than A 220-1; "Of elegance" is wisely dropped and 242 added.

✓ 243. That is, until shortly after September, 1795, when Wordsworth and his sister settled at Racedown. He was then twenty-five and a half years old. A 223 was removed presumably because Wordsworth's restoration, described in xi and xiii, was subsequent to the going out of his youth and the reunion with Dorothy.

✓ 244-52. Cf. 282-9; ii. 306-10; iv. 248-53; vi. 557-9; x. 437-63; *Recluse*, I. i. 703-44; and Chapter III. The early death of his mother and the lack of home life may have been in part responsible. As Professor Bradley points out (*Oxford Lectures*, 1909, p. 126), the earlier and more essential Wordsworth dwelt on the sublime, the grand, the austere; the Wordsworth of most of the *Lyrical Ballads* and of xiii. 39-278 developed under Dorothy's influence after the loss of sympathy with the French Revolution.

249. Substituted for A 229, where "Nature" must mean "the congenital or inborn qualities, characters or talents of a person, in contrast with the effects of instruction or training,"<sup>31</sup> and not mountains, trees, and the like. By these last Dorothy was as much affected as her brother, and the same influence could not be held mainly responsible for the "mild grace" of the one and the "over-sternness" of the other. For "confident" see iii. 355 n.; vi. 32-3 n.

251-6. The figure starts well but, though consistent, is less effective towards the end. "Twinkle" is not happy.

256-60. This is the Racedown-Alfoxden period described in XIII, not the time of absorption in the French Revolution.

260. *a nobler than herself*: Man; cf. A 266-8, 448-54; viii. 485-94 n.

262. *common things*: 257-60 and "these gifts Of . . . humanity" suggest that Wordsworth meant common things in man and human relationships, not in nature.

264. *humanity*: Love for man.

275. It would be better if the new paragraph began with "Thus fear" (282) instead of in this line, since 282-301 refer quite as much to the influence of Dorothy as to that of Coleridge.

277. *capacious*: Better than "loving" (A 248), especially in view of the repetition of "love" in the two following lines; yet the emphasis on Coleridge's affection is significant. To the de S. note on A 247-69 it might be added that the acknowledgment of spiritual obligations in xi. A 905-8 does not appear in the final text. On the other hand, the Preface to *The Excursion* speaks of *The Prelude* as "addressed to a dear Friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the Author's Intellect is deeply indebted." Wordsworth wrote to W. R. Hamilton on June 25, 1832, "He [Coleridge] and my beloved sister are the two beings to whom my intellect is most indebted." Wordsworth delivered a long "eulogium" on Coleridge as a man, poet, and prose writer to Tom Moore. See Moore's Diary for February 20, 1835.

281. *kindred influence*: An improvement over "gentle Spirit" (A 252)—an inadequate characterization of Coleridge—since it makes more clear that the change described in the fol-

lowing lines was due to the influence of Dorothy and Coleridge and thus connects this paragraph closely with the preceding one. Professor Garrod's interpretation of "heart of hearts"—"the imagination as distinguished from (a) the senses and (b) reason" (p. 127)—does not fit the present passage or, in my opinion, the two he quotes.

282b-7. Substituted for A 253-5, which do not mention fear or mystery. In D<sup>2</sup> Wordsworth enlarged on "unity" (concerning which and Coleridge's emphasis upon it see ii. 221 n.) by substituting for A 255 the more definite "of sense and soul, Of life . . . eternity"; later he changed "unity" to "mystery," an idea more in keeping with the context. In its final form the passage refers to two of the feeding sources of his peculiar power (see Chapter III and pp. 141-6, 152-3 above). The lines are a restatement of 243-52 but with the emphasis on the weakening of the sense of fear and mystery (see 293-6 n.). With 286 compare *Excursion*, iii. 842-3, "Powers Of soul and sense mysteriously allied."

289-90. Richer in thought and more flowing in rhythm than A 257-8. The reference is to the development traced in XIII although the "deep distress" which later "humanised" Wordsworth's soul ("Peele Castle," 36, written the same year as the present book) was perhaps also in his mind.

291. *howsoe'er endowed*: Despite de S., xlvii, the rhythm seems to me better than that of A 259b.

293-6. These lines refer to feelings such as are described in ii. 399-414. It is hard to see wherein this rapture is evil or why the chastening of it should be looked upon with satisfaction. Indeed, the passage sounds very like the first section of the Immortality Ode, written three years earlier, with the difference that what is there lamented as a heavy loss is here considered as a gain.<sup>82</sup> Joy, which to Coleridge was

the spirit and the power  
Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower,  
A new Earth and new Heaven,  
("Dejection," 67-9)

is here spoken of as something that needed to be "stemmed And balanced."<sup>83</sup> Such had not been Wordsworth's opinion

when he described the poet as "the happiest of all men," as one "who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe."<sup>34</sup> But there was in him a strong tendency—in part egotism, in part whistling to keep his courage up—to ignore losses and to present his general condition at the time he was writing as in all respects—emotional, intellectual, spiritual—a goal achieved.<sup>35</sup> Despite his emphasis on youth, which he had lost, as the great period of life and the source of later strength, he endeavored to make *The Prelude* "in the end All gratulant" (386-7). He seems to have forgotten his earlier lines,

Ah! is there one who ever has been young,  
Nor needs a warning voice to tame the pride  
Of intellect and virtue's self-esteem?  
One is there, though the wisest and the best  
Of all mankind, who covets not at times  
Union that cannot be;—who would not give,  
If so he might, to duty and to truth  
The eagerness of infantine desire?  
A tranquillising spirit presses now  
On my corporeal frame. (ii. 19-28)

Here it is "the eagerness of infantine desire" that is admired rather than the "tranquillising spirit" commended in the present passage. And in xii. 281-2 he confesses "I see by glimpses now; when age comes on, May scarcely see at all." Since, therefore, Wordsworth was acutely aware of the value of what was gone, it is likely that here, in the conclusion of his autobiography, he is trying, as he had tried twice before, to persuade himself that his loss was fully compensated. In "Tintern Abbey" he had declared that he did not mourn for the dizzy raptures Nature had previously yielded him:

other gifts  
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,  
Abundant recompense. (86-8)

He *would* believe, yes, but did he? Not for long, certainly, since four years later he began a noble lament for the glory that "hath past away . . . from the earth." "Whither," he



asked, "is fled the visionary gleam?" And finding no answer to the question he laid the poem aside. Some years later (the Fenwick note says at least two) he took it up again and finally concluded it about the time he wrote the present book. The later stanzas, although they give the impression of gain rather than loss, do not minimize the loss:

nothing can bring back the hour  
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower.

They are in fact only a more eloquent expression of what is said in some earlier lines in *The Prelude*:

we learn to live  
In reconciliation with our stunted powers;  
(To endure this state of meagre vassalage. (v. 516-18)

Meanwhile, in 1804, he had written:

O Man, that from thy fair and shining youth  
Age might but take the things Youth needed not!  
("There is a Flower," 23-4)

The year after completing the Immortality Ode he composed *The White Doe of Rylstone* and a few months later returned to *The Excursion*, on which he worked for the next four years. The theme of these poems, as of "Resolution and Independence" (1802) and in part of "The Kitten and Falling Leaves" (1804), is "Despondency Corrected." It will be clear, therefore, that a considerable section of Wordsworth's verse deals with melancholy, that the importance he attached to joy seems to have been due in no slight degree to his partial loss of it, that he began to be conscious of this loss so early as 1798, and that his vital feelings of delight, still further weakened by age, domestic anxieties, and the absence of Coleridge,<sup>36</sup> were so numbed by the death of his brother that he apparently took alarm<sup>37</sup> and sought in this concluding book to convince himself that the change meant only a gain in poise,—youthful turbulence "by judgment steadied" (A 294). He had longed for a repose that always is the same and now he appeared to have achieved it. "Me hath Nature tamed" (*Recluse*, I. i. 726) he wrote in 1800. See also *Excursion*, ix. 44-92, Inscription XIII, "Near the Spring of the Hermitage" ("divine tranquillity"),

and "Blind Highland Boy," 166-215, 243-5. It may be significant that in the final text of 126-9 "peace . . . [and] repose In moral judgments" replace the earlier "truth in moral judgments and delight That fails not in the external universe." Certainly it seems ominous that the lines which immediately precede those we are considering tell of the weakening of the sense of fear and mystery—two of the chief sources of Wordsworth's peculiar power.

The passage before us deals with the period between 1795 and 1798, when, as "Tintern Abbey" (written in 1798) affirms, the first ecstasy of youth and early manhood was already abated, although Wordsworth was then nearing the height of his creative powers. They, and the general tone of XIV, also reflect his state of mind when he was composing this book, not long after the death of his brother in February, 1805. He was then suffering not only a second and greater decline in his delight in the external world but a serious dulling of his imagination. The "Ode to Duty," "Peele Castle," and parts of the Immortality Ode were written about the same time as the present passage and the remainder of XIV, and all reveal the loss of "the deep power of joy" as well as a new emphasis on "duty and pathetic truth" and on "thoughts Of man and his concerns, such as become A human Creature."<sup>88</sup> It seems to me, therefore, that the present lines constitute an exception to the general truth that Wordsworth "completed [the original *Prelude*] . . . in the spirit in which it had been begun, with no sign of wavering from his early faith," and that here as "in the *Ode to Duty*, where he renounces his reliance on the genial sense of youth," we have "the first signs of the change which dictated" the later revisions of the work (de S., lxi).

296-301. Substituted for A 264-8. See 179-87 n.

A 264-5. *balanced . . . Is reason*: Means much the same thing as "By judgment steadied" (A 294). On reason see iv. A 296 n.; here, as usual, Wordsworth disparages analytical reason (see ii. 203-32 n.).

A 265. The semicolon after "reason" indicates that "*duty and pathetic truth*" are not in opposition with "Reason" and do not explain it but express additional ideas. The rapture is balanced by Reason, by the sense of duty, and by "pathetic

truth." This last I take to mean much the same thing as "Peele Castle," 33-40, 53-60; that is, sympathy or tenderness combined with the realistic facing of fact.

A 266-8. See viii. 485-94 n. "Where Man is sphered" seems to mean no more than "Which man has as the sphere of his activities." For "and which" see iii. A 584 n.

303b-6a. See pp. 509-10 above.

306-11. Wordsworth here refers to the period described in i. 114-269, 620-46, when, finding himself unequal to the composition of the important long poem he wished to write, he began *The Prelude* as a means to "taking stock of himself and examining how far Nature and Education have qualified him for his task" (de S., xxv). He ignores the six or seven years that have elapsed between the beginning and the completion of his autobiography although during this interval he had composed so much important poetry that there was no longer any need of "taking stock of himself." That is, the purpose which led to the undertaking of *The Prelude* was soon lost sight of, being replaced by the loftier aims and larger plans which had originally been reserved for *The Recluse*. This great philosophic work of which he dreamed was as yet unwritten but he had already completed nearly all of it that he was able to vitalize.

v. (312-29. Cf. 305-6. The forces entering into a poet's development which Wordsworth felt that he had handled least satisfactorily are books (see iii. A 524-30 n.; v, especially v. 166-222, A 630-7, pp. 375-81 above), nature, fancy, and knowledge of human nature. The neglect of adult reading, which to many appears the most serious of these omissions, Wordsworth characteristically regarded as the lightest (see Chapter VII). On the other hand there will be less regret for what particularly troubled him in his treatment of nature—his failure to deal with that lighter charm, beloved of Fancy, which finds in rivers and groves "apt illustrations of the moral world" (319). Presumably he had in mind not so much direct moralizing as seeking in nature pleasing, illuminating, or comforting parallels to every-day human life, as in his stanzas "To the Daisy," "To the Small Celandine," "The Green Linnet," and "A Wren's Nest," all of which are listed as

"Poems of the Fancy." "A hundred times," he says, the daisy has given him

Some apprehension;  
Some steady love; some brief delight;  
Some memory that had taken flight;  
Some chime of fancy wrong or right;  
Or stray invention. ("In youth," 41-8)

Of the two addresses to a skylark the one which is free from didacticism is classed under Fancy; the one which ends with a moralizing couplet, under imagination.)

A 283. *here*: Should be "hers." Mr. Gordon Wordsworth wrote me: "The line is scored out in both A and B and makes no re-appearance. In both the final word looks rather more like hers than here."

A 285-306. Condensed in 1832 or 1839, by changes in the first four lines and by the omission of nearly all the rest, into 317-20. A 299-303 is summarized in 320. Presumably Wordsworth felt either that the passage, which introduces a new idea and is by no means easy reading, obscured the general course of thought, or that he had said enough about fancy in viii. 365-475. The ministry of fancy may have seemed less important to him in later years than at the beginning of the century. Yet the lines are of considerable interest to students of Wordsworth's mind, and 303-6b are admirable. Parentheses before "with" (A 298) and after "research" (A 299) and a dash after "life" (A 301) might clarify the meaning. "Another face" (A 296) than the youthful fancy beheld. "Them" (A 296, A 301) and "their" (A 298) refer to "the Rivers and the Groves" (A 295). The two "sometimes" (A 299, A 301) emphasize the contrast between "subtle skill . . . and . . . elaborate research" (A 298-9) on the one hand and "involuntary sympathy" (A 302) on the other. A 303-6 recall "Tintern Abbey," 80-3:

a feeling and a love,  
That had no need of a remoter charm,  
By thought supplied, nor any interest  
Unborrowed from the eye.

322-3. The passive voice employed in 312-16 is continued

and the unfortunate "we," "my" of A 307, A 309 thereby eliminated. "And" no longer connects two expressions in opposition, as in A 308.

329-47. The sudden transition to a different subject and one that belongs properly in v (see pp. 273, 394 above) suggests that 331-47 or 331-41a may originally have been composed as an independent fragment. ("I gained this knowledge of human nature," Wordsworth continues, "through association with my school-fellows." Then he adds, as if enlarging on the same idea, "I acquired hardy independence, moral robustness, and emotional control, the ability to accept and endure what I did not understand, and to view the world objectively, not mixing my feelings with my observation." Clearly he is here (unless it be in the last two lines) speaking of moral qualities, the development of character, whereas in 321-30 he is referring to intellectual powers, analysis and discrimination. Both, to be sure, relate to our understanding of human nature.) In ii. 387-92a and iii. 128-32a he mentions the possibility of his not preserving this "wholesome separation," as he often does not when he speaks of nature. Indeed, complete separation is impossible, as ii. 232-61 makes clear. Wordsworth means that, so far as may be, we should restrain our emotions until we have observed accurately and dispassionately. He commends public schools, for reasons similar to those mentioned here, in his letter to Daniel Stuart of September 7, 1817. The Wanderer as a boy learned

To look on Nature with a humble heart,  
Self-questioned where it did not understand.

(*Excursion*, i. 241-2)

A 332. *Yet*: Mr. Gordon Wordsworth wrote me: "A gives Let. In B it is altered to Yet (probably by M. W.). It remains Yet in all subsequent MSS." With the removal of the stiff and unnecessary A 333 (note the double negative), "Yet" is required, but so long as "be" remained in the text it called for "Let."

A 335-42, A 345-7, A 351b-2, A 355-6. Wisely omitted as, except for A 338-9, pedestrian, unimportant, repetitious (A 340-2 repeats A 211-46), or needlessly detailed. Lines 369b-72a are much like A 333, A 335-7 and might well have gone with them.

351-68. Less easy and natural than the more diffuse early version. The cautious and stilted double negative of 357 is not in A (which, however, has its own "no redundant," A 356, later dropped), and the substitution, by one who had vigorously attacked poetic diction, of the elegant and conventional 353-4 for the direct A 349 is distressing. Both texts contain a good deal of learned, literary diction; the change to "harboured" (351) may be defended on the ground that "an undomestic Wanderer" has no "home." A 343-9 and its variants give the impression that this most obscure period of the poet's life, which some have pictured as darkened by remorse over Annette, was a pleasant one. Wandering, it should be remembered, was his "passion" (see vi. 252 n.). Lines 360-1 and 367-9 are well expressed. The figure in 368-9 is that of removing an obstacle from the bed of a stream and thus allowing it to follow its natural course. *The Prelude* opens with the joy of the release brought by Calvert's bequest; it closes with an account of the gift and of the composition of the poem; that is, 369 brings us back to i. 1 and all between is given over to Wordsworth's development up to the time the poem begins.

A 363, Y variant. *lonely*: See Chapter iv.

374-5. Wordsworth was but thirty-five when he wrote these lines, only seven years nearer the termination of his long course than when "this labour was begun" (that is, the body of the work; Coleridge could not have recalled the composition of the preamble). Yet he was conscious of waning powers; he knew he had aged rapidly in these seven years.

377-81. Fine lines, largely monosyllabic (as are 382, 408-9, 411-12, 422, 425), in the oracular style. The state of mind here referred to is that described in i. 114-65, 234-69, 620-5. Compare "reproaches" (i. 623) with "reproach" (xiv. 379). The question in 378, which is equivalent to "What is your spiritual condition?", echoes *Genesis*, iii. 9, "And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?"

382-4. If the natural word-order had been kept it would have been immediately clear that "unwearied" refers to the lark and not to Wordsworth's own singing in *The Prelude*.

386-7. Cf. 162-209a, especially the last four lines, and pp. 282-3 above.

388-92. Wordsworth's depression blinded him to the fact that even apart from *The Prelude*, which is its own magnificent excuse for being, he had already "accomplish[ed] . . . Suffi-  
cient to excuse . . . this Record" (A 387-9). The earlier ver-  
sions of 390 are simpler and do not have the cautious double  
negative, "no insufficient."

392-418. Wordsworth dwells lovingly on this year at Al-  
foxden, as well he might—"Bliss was it in *that* dawn to be  
alive." Present grief and the fear lest his creative powers were  
ebbing heightened by contrast the glory of those "golden days."  
It will be noticed that the changes introduced in 395-8 and 416-  
17, the addition of "steeped . . . hours" (402-3), and, in A<sup>2</sup>,  
of "blest," "progeny of golden days," "Embower'd beside the  
crystal springs" all emphasize the joy of the earlier period.  
The life of the Solitary and his bride in a Devon cottage (*Excursion*, iii. 513-49) may be a reminiscence of this Quantock period.

394. *liveliest*: In A, "sweetest"; see de S., xlvi. "Yester-  
day" means just that, and not "former years": that summer  
of seven or eight years ago will stand out more clearly in your  
memory than the most vivid occurrence of a day ago.

395-9. Less spontaneous but more accurate than A 393-6.  
The Quantocks are an unusually smooth, treeless ridge of high,  
connecting hills covered not with grass but with bracken, gorse,  
and heather. "Bewitching" and "chaunt" are more exact  
than "delicious" and "speak." "Combs" is the local word  
for the valleys on the flanks of the hills.

395. *That summer*: Since Wordsworth arrived at Alfoxden  
(Alfoxton is the proper spelling) in July, 1797, and left there  
about June 10, 1798,<sup>89</sup> he is here fusing the latter part of the  
first summer with the early part of the second, or thinking of  
the year as one long summer.

399-400. *that . . . Mariner*: Quoted from "The Ancient  
Mariner," 19-20, 39-40.

407-14. The effective repetitions, "misery . . . miserable,"  
"To thee . . . by thee . . . To thee," are in A; so likewise is the  
cautious double negative "not unworthy."

419-25. This event of February 5, 1805, is the latest referred  
to in *The Prelude*. The wordy A 415-16 are admirably con-  
densed into 419; "and heart" is substituted for "frame of"





## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> De S., xxiii, xxiv, xxxvii-ix. De S., 470, includes in the list of manuscripts for this book (by mistake for Book xiii, see pp. xxii, 446), "for ll. 184-203 J." No part of xiv is found in MS J. Since in MS W lines corresponding to 1-62 are (unlike what follows) a fair copy made by Mrs. Wordsworth, they were probably composed some years earlier than the rest, along with similar incidents of the poet's youth (see 40-62 n.).

<sup>2</sup> Dorothy's letter to Lady Beaumont of June 11, 1805, reveals how profoundly, even after the completion of *The Prelude*, William was affected by John's death.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Beaumont of June 3, 1805 (quoted, de S., xli).

<sup>4</sup> Wordsworth wrote Beaumont on August 1, 1806 [1805 in Knight], "I have returned to the Recluse. . . . Should Coleridge return, so that I might have some conversation with him upon the subject, I should go on swimmingly." Dorothy wrote Lady Beaumont, December 25, 1805: "William . . . is very anxious to get forward with the *Recluse* . . . but I do not think he will be able to do much more till we have heard of Coleridge."

<sup>5</sup> See Wordsworth's letter to Beaumont of September 20, 1824.

<sup>6</sup> A 56-7 has "chasm" and "deep," D. S. (1793), 498-9 has "gulf" and "bottomless."

<sup>7</sup> "These" in A points still more definitely to what has immediately preceded. "Then" seems to contrast this excursion with that to "Sarum's Plain."

<sup>8</sup> *Literary Reminiscences, Works*, Boston, 1851, I, 314 n. Not in Masson's edition.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. also iii. 180-7, and *Recluse*, "Prospectus," 35-40.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. A 64, A 72-3, 72; v. 598 n. and compare this scene with ii. 302-22.

<sup>11</sup> "Above all" should begin a new sentence, as it does in A<sup>8</sup> and B<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Line 84. A 81-2, which is clearer, speaks of the power to "make one object . . . impress itself Upon all others, and pervade them" (cf. W variant of 93 ff., and de S., 524, the concluding lines of the second fragment). A 80-1 (not in the final text), "by abrupt and unhabitual influence Doth make . . .," is probably illustrated in the strangeness of the chasm in the familiar moonlight, and the strangeness which the familiar sounds acquire by rising through the chasm in the mist.

<sup>13</sup> *Biographia Literaria*, chapters xxii, xv (ed. Shawcross, II, 103, 14); cf. "The poet . . . diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination" (*ibid.*, chapter xiv, p. 12).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. de S., 602, lines 48-9: "Nature thrusts Upon our notice."

<sup>15</sup> *Biographia Literaria*, chapter xiv, next to last paragraph.

<sup>16</sup> "Essay, supplementary to the Preface" (*Oxf. W.*, p. 952).

<sup>17</sup> *Poetry and Prose*, ed. Keynes, 1927, pp. 1024, 844.

<sup>18</sup> *Table Talk*, July 21, 1832.

<sup>19</sup> *Defence of Poetry, Works*, ed. H. B. Forman, vii, 140; cf., "On Life," *ibid.*, vi, 258, and letter to Peacock of August 16, 1818.

<sup>20</sup> For example in ii. 361-2; iii. 101-3; iv. 166-8; vii. 722-30; W variant of xii. A 178-80; de S., 547-8, 606; Immortality Ode, 130-2 ("And custom lie upon thee with a weight, Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life").

<sup>21</sup> Cf. i. 469-75 n.; ii. 399-409; iii. 124-35; vi. 774; xii. 181-3; *Excursion*, i. 160-1 ("In their [caves' and crags'] fixed and steady lineaments He traced an ebbing and a flowing mind"). Wordsworth's purpose in the *Lyrical Ballads* was "to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us" (*Biographia Literaria*, chapter xiv, second paragraph); cf. the quotation from Shelley given in 112 n. and Blake's "'When the Sun rises, do you not see a round disk of fire somewhat like a Guinea?' O no, no, I see an Innumerable company of the Heavenly host crying, 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty'" (end of "Vision of the Last Judgment").

<sup>22</sup> See pp. 49-51, 234-5 above. It is not unlikely that we owe these lines to Wordsworth's fear that he was losing his "vital feelings of delight" in the external world (see 293-6 n.). Only through feeling, "passion" (see Chapter II), and wonder (see pp. 480-92 above) are we able to see the universe moving "with light and life informed" (161).

<sup>23</sup> *Wordsworth*, 159. Despite his emphasis on the creative powers of the mind and the superiority of man to nature (ii. 245-61 n., viii. 485-94 n.), Wordsworth saw in the external world the "lasting grandeur" of the Infinite who pervaded it.

<sup>24</sup> *Excursion*, v. 1012.

<sup>25</sup> The terms "mild" and "passionate" are from the A<sup>8</sup> variant of A 156-66; "human" from A 164; "higher" from 181 (A 161); "more intellectual" from A 166.

<sup>26</sup> The "cautious double negative," to which Professor Harper very properly objects (see p. 606 above), is not in A 163.

<sup>27</sup> Professor de Selincourt may be right in attributing the change from "intellectual" to "spiritual" to the same lamentable tendency which gave us 181-7 in place of A 162-5. Yet, as Wordsworth kept the phrase "intellectual Love" in 207 and with it the pronoun "that," which refers to this passage, it seems likely that he introduced "spiritual" in the hope of giving the reader a clearer conception (as I believe he does) of his complex idea. See ii. 315 n. and xii. 45 n.

<sup>28</sup> Nothing is said about the imagination in W, although it includes A 161-5.

<sup>29</sup> *Defence of Poetry, Works*, ed. Forman, vii, 111, 135.

<sup>30</sup> "One thought" is the A<sup>2</sup>D reading of A 183. In the final text this one idea has three parts, "human Being, Eternity, and God."

<sup>31</sup> A. O. Lovejoy and G. Boas, *Primitivism in Antiquity*, Baltimore, 1935, p. 447.

<sup>32</sup> In the lines "Composed upon an Evening of Extraordinary Splendour" (1818) Wordsworth likewise deals with "the light Full early lost, and fruitlessly deplored" (73-4); in "Peele Castle," when speaking of nature, he declares, "A power is gone, which nothing can restore" (35); and in "Resolution and Independence" (1802) he affirms,

We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;  
But thereof come in the end despondency and madness. (48-9)

<sup>33</sup> Do these words add anything to "chastened?"

<sup>34</sup> *Memoirs*, I, 173 (*Oxf. W.*, p. 899); Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (*Oxf. W.*, p. 937),—written in 1800.

<sup>35</sup> See pp. 282-3, 286-7 above and vi. 35-41 and n.

<sup>36</sup> See the fragment printed in de S., 606.

<sup>87</sup> Note the self-justification of A 131-9, the mention of "undiminish'd powers" (A 127), which was later omitted, and the fear of enslavement of the mind to a dead universe (A 136-43)—which is very close to loss of joy in nature. It was partly because his earliest years were his happiest that Wordsworth set so high a value on childhood and youth. Like Coleridge ("Dejection," 1802, lines 59-86) he probably found joy essential to his imaginative activity. See vi 171-8 n. and Legouis' chapter on Wordsworth in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*.

<sup>88</sup> A 257-65; cf. "A deep distress hath humanised my Soul" ("Peele Castle," 36). It is sometimes forgotten that the Immortality Ode is concerned not alone with the dulling of responsiveness to sense impressions described in the opening stanzas but with the heavier loss that came in 1805. It has been shown by E. H. Hartsell and Nowell Smith in the *Times Literary Supplement* for May 30 and June 20, 1935, that the "Ode to Duty" was written by September, 1804, that is, before John Wordsworth's death.

<sup>89</sup> Dorothy's letter to Richard Wordsworth of June 13, 1798. According to William's letter to Joseph Cottle of August 28, 1798, he and his sister reached London, August 27. Apparently they spent about two months in Bristol.

<sup>90</sup> A. O. Lovejoy and G. Boas, *Primitivism in Antiquity*, p. 450.

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